FIDEL, REDFORD, AND MOVIES, BY MERLE LINDA WOLIN

APRIL 16, 1990 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

What do guys want? · James Joll: The first Czech republic · Prettying-up the PLO

BASSILY AKSYONOV GOING HOME

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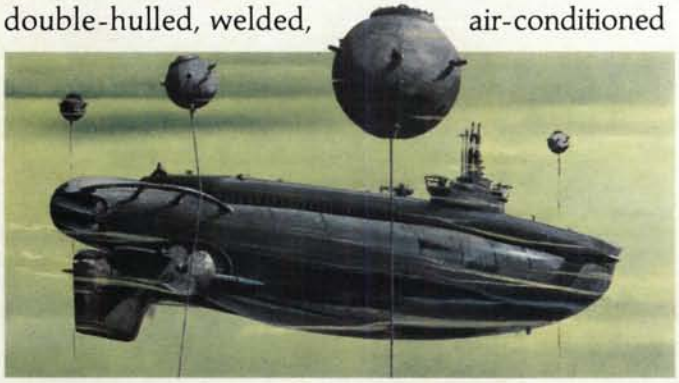
Squeezed into a crude, 14-foot craft, John P. Holland proved the basic principles of submarines in 1878. His poetically named "Boat No. 1" was hauled to the Passaic River by 16 stallions for testing. It stuck in the mud, it leaked, but it came back up.

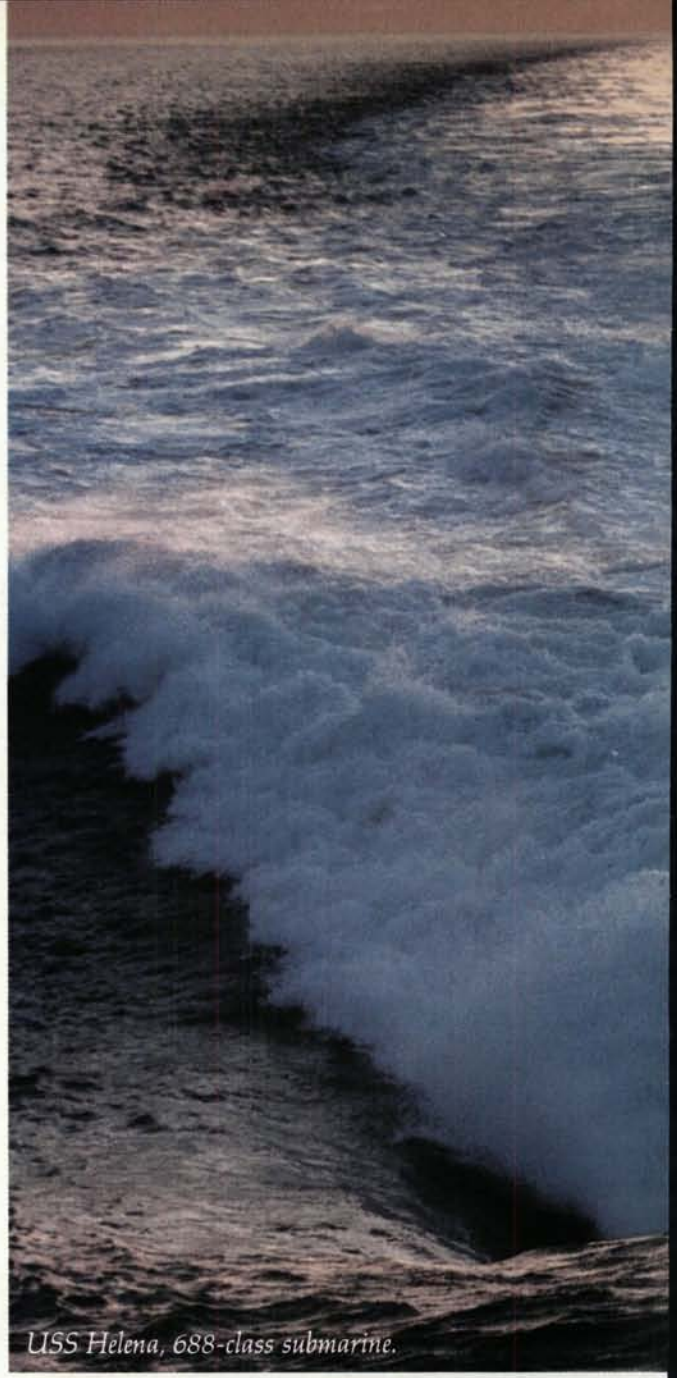
To us, the only thing more remarkable than the submarine itself was the courage of the submariner. Something that's still true today.

Holland got his Electric Boat Company, our earliest ancestor, off to a strong start in 1900, when the 74-ton submersible Holland became the U.S. Navy's first submarine. Showing his confidence in this new type vessel, President Theodore Roosevelt alarmed Secret Service bodyguards by taking an unscheduled dive aboard an A-class Plunger, August 25, 1905.

Running silent as well as deep became possible in 1933, when Electric Boat launched Cuttlefish, the first double-hulled, welded, air-conditioned submarine. She was the prototype for all World War I Navy fleet submarines.



All WWII fleet submarines were based on Cuttlefish, the first submarine to be welded, rather than riveted, and a technical milestone.



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Today, our Tridents, the world's most advanced submarines, routinely patrol for 70 days without surfacing. Longer than the Washington Monument is tall, they are so carefully made that they cruise in virtual silence.

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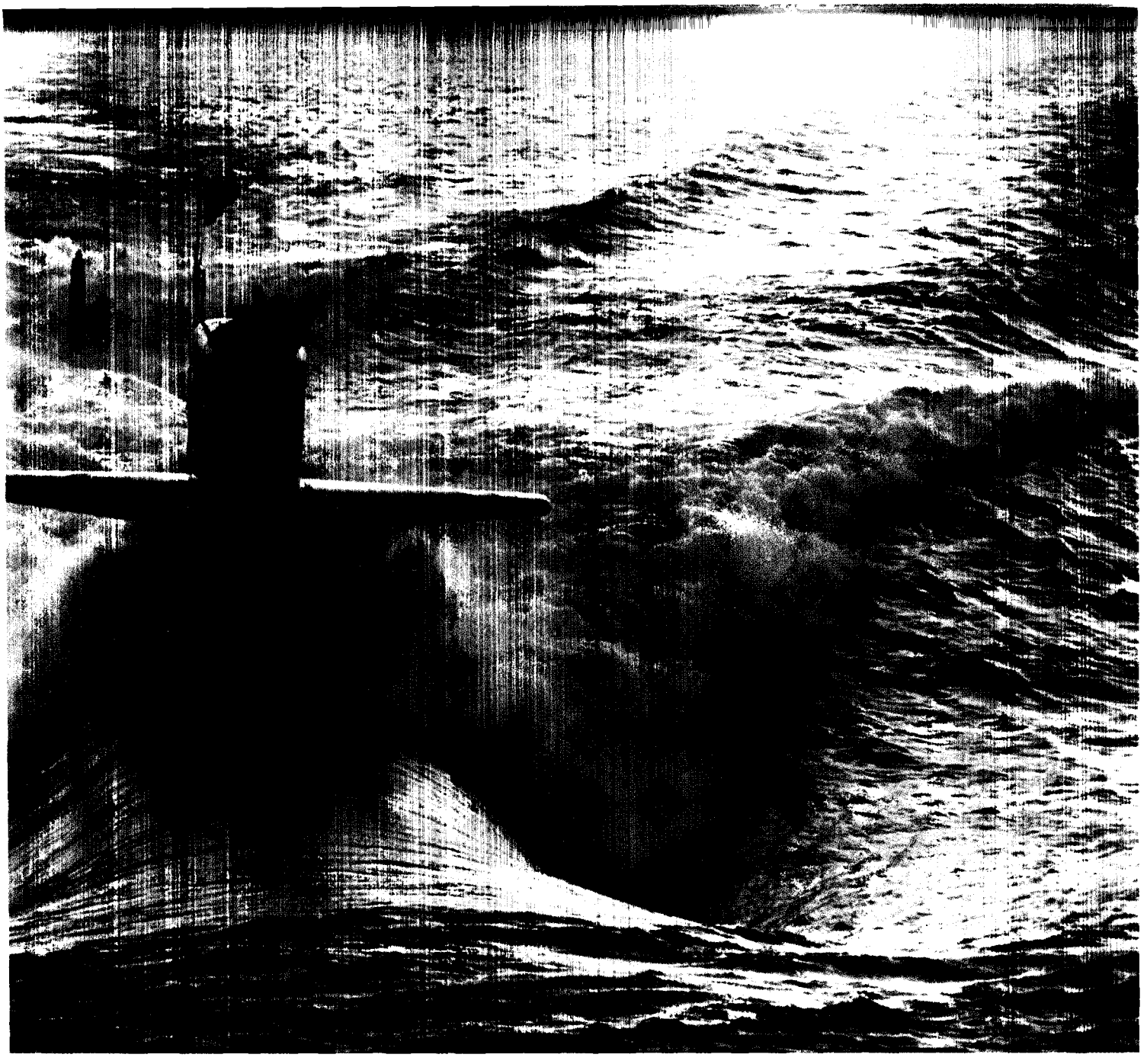

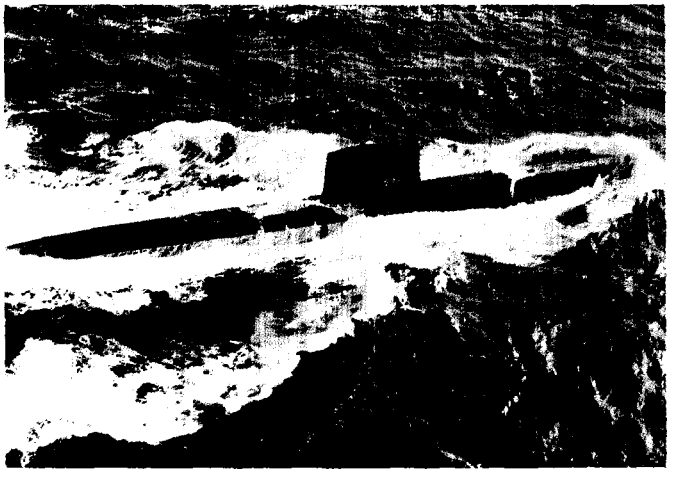

USS Nautilus was the first vessel to radio, "Underway on nuclear power." She then became the first to sail under the North Pole.

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FROM WASHINGTON

More to read

What the world needs, you probably weren't thinking just now, is more to read. How about a new magazine of ideas for American liberals? That's the premise of *The American Prospect*, an offering by some youngish intellectuals who would like to be the Galbraiths and Schlesingers of the next liberal golden age. The Galbraith and Schlesinger of the last liberal golden age are in there, too.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. is present, recapping his theory that political changes come in thirty-year cycles, and thus the 1990s will be the next decade of liberal triumph, like the 1960s and 1930s. It's a nice theory. Of course, if it's true that this delightful recycling of liberalism is inevitable and imminent, it hardly seems necessary for liberals to slog through 100,000-odd words of academic prose every three months—let alone produce them. Alert to this conundrum, Schlesinger is cautious to qualify his optimism and modify his theory: "These are cycles of opportunity, not cycles of necessity." In other words (on page 11 of 152): keep reading, you're not off the hook.

Any sensible writer welcomes a new publication. Any sensible citizen welcomes another political voice. Any sensible liberal welcomes help of any sort. A sensible reader without unlimited time has mixed feelings, but can always hope that the thing won't be very good and you won't have to renew. So a hearty welcome to *The American Prospect*, even though it all-but-explicitly claims to fill a vacuum in liberal thought allegedly created by the magazine you hold in your hands.

That said, I can't help noting chauvinistically that there is no thought in *The American Prospect* that couldn't also have appeared in THE NEW REPUBLIC. Even many of the bylines are the same, except for at least one author who boycotts us for our lack of liberal purity. It is what this new magazine doesn't publish, as opposed to what it does, that presumably makes it superior to TNR as a fount of liberalism. One small reason conservatives have done better than liberals in the ideological war of the past couple of decades, I think, is that conservatives are always looking for converts whereas liberals are always looking for heretics. Seek and ye shall find.

Democrats in general and liberals in particular have been entranced by the *idea* of ideas for quite a while. That's admirable. Hoping for some intellectual breakthrough is obviously healthier than hoping for a charismatic hero to appear à la Ronald Reagan or hoping for economic catastrophe—which are the other two likely recipes for a Democratic revival. The founders of *The American Prospect* note the role of ideas—most notably supply-side economics—in the conservative revival of the 1970s. Of course, these liberals believe that those conservative ideas were wrong—or rather, not so much genuine ideas as gimmicks. And yet they worked. Gimmicks can be honest as well as dishonest. Maybe what liberals need is not so much some genuine ideas but some good, cheap gimmicks. That is one reason Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's Social Security tax cut is so appealing.

Nothing so low-minded as a gimmick appears in the premier issue of *The American Prospect*. Although it is more about the idea of ideas than about ideas themselves, a few evocative themes run through several of the articles and provide a sense of where these liberals, at least, think liberalism's head is at.

One repeated theme is that the collapse of communism in Europe is good for liberalism in America. For founding co-editor Paul Starr, a professor of sociology at Princeton, this is a sort of spiritual matter, a question of sharing the excitement of changing times. "The world's new realities are our renewed possibilities." Arthur Schlesinger Jr. takes a more practical view: "Anticommunism has been the ligature holding the conservative coalition together." Without it as an overwhelming concern, that coalition will fragment. Even more pragmatically, Schlesinger notes that the end of the cold war will free up money for liberal initiatives.

Another theme is that Republicans have stolen liberalism. Or rather, they have embraced the liberal agenda of the past, while tarring its creators as L-word "liberals"—something awful—and have borrowed liberal rhetoric about the future without volunteering the money to back it up. George Bush, says Mario Cuomo (as quoted by Schlesinger), "has simply tried to earn himself some cheap grace by reciting a little Democratic poetry." Bush's strategy, Schlesinger says, "is to proclaim a fervent commitment to liberal goals and then to add that it is just such a gosh darn shame" that the government can't pay to achieve them. John Kenneth Galbraith asserts that liberalism's very success in making people feel financially secure, through Social Security, Medicare, etc., has given them the luxury to vote conservative. (Conservatives might reply that liberal hopes to profit politically from victory in the cold war represent the same kind of ironic reversal.)

A third theme concerns the nature of the new ideas the Democrats need. They shouldn't be "moderate," as groups like the Democratic Leadership Council keep insisting. The goal should not be some sort of compromise between the old Democratic program and the current Republican one. And the program should be designed to have political appeal to people as citizens of society at large, not to a collection of interest groups.

William Julius Wilson, the University of Chicago sociologist, shows the way in his piece on policies for the black underclass. They should be "race-neutral," he says, for two reasons. First, because the equal opportunity revolution of the 1950s and 1960s and the affirmative action policies of the 1970s and 1980s have achieved what they can, expanding and uplifting the black middle class but leaving many behind. Second, because these "race conscious" policies alienated many whites. What's needed, and what will work politically, Wilson argues, is a more broad-scale progressive agenda: "job skills training, comprehensive health-care legislation, educational reforms in the public schools, child-care legislation, and crime and drug abuse prevention. . . ." I hope he's right.

Publications like *The American Prospect* (and TNR, for that matter) are built on a faith that there really is some connection between policy ideas written on a page and what goes on inside a politician's head. Sometimes the faith is strained. Our own Robert Kuttner, the other founding co-editor, offers some fancy and (to me) unconvincing arguments for trade restriction, and complains: "In the 1988 election, the press treated Richard Gephardt as a simple Japan-basher, not as a candidate offering a different theory of political economy." A different theory of political economy! Kuttner admits: "Indeed, Gephardt himself was not quite sure just what that dissenting theory might be." Indeed is right. I hope *The American Prospect* aspires to more than providing retroactive theoretical justification for things politicians wish to say anyway.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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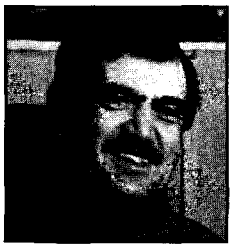

Cover: At a mock Soviet exhibition in Moscow, four mustachioed Russians: clockwise from bottom, Vassily Aksyonov, Anastas Mikoyan, Joseph Stalin, and Lazar Kaganovich. Article on page 21.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Animal wrongs

To the editors:
In his cover story "Are Animals People Too?" (March 12), Robert Wright presents a refreshingly clear and candid account of the philosophical quandaries generated for the reflective person by humanity's (often abhorrent) treatment of animals. But I wonder why he never explicitly considers the Kantian view that people have moral rights (that is, people are members of the "kingdom of ends") in virtue of the special ability they have to perceive an ethical duty and conform their conduct to that duty. Another person is the object of my moral respect, according to Kant, because he or she is "rational" in this special sense of being a moral agent, not in the narrower sense of having a high level of consciousness or thinking ability. This is why a Kantian is able consistently to deny that non-human animals have moral rights, and to explain why we may ethically "use" them as means to our own ends.

Wright suggests that seizing upon "rationality" as the factor that puts humans in a moral class separate from other animals is arbitrary, but on Kant's reading of "rationality" the arbitrariness is not evident. It is a well-principled theoretical move, having a clear rational basis, to limit the sphere of our moral obligation to those beings capable of reciprocally acting upon moral obligations to us; it is the moral autonomy of the other being that is the object of our respect when we grant that being rights. And even if the sphere of those with moral *rights* contains only morally autonomous people, there may be good reasons for benevolence, kindness, compassion, and so on, toward non-persons.

I have my doubts about both utilitarianism and Kantianism when applied to the question of the status of animals. But a strict reading of Kant does provide an intelligent and consistent alternative to the balancing of animal pain versus human benefit indulged in by the utilitarian.

BARBARA HANNAN
Moscow, Idaho

To the editors:
Robert Wright gives evidence of the mischief that results when the idea of rights is stripped of its theological underpinnings. According to the Judeo-Christian tradition, human beings have rights because they are created in the image and likeness of God. This is what distinguishes us from animals and other forms of creation. While Wright may not have this tradition as his premise, the fact that he can even begin the definition of a moral calculus of human and baboon rights ought to cause him to question whatever premise he substitutes for it.

The Judeo-Christian tradition does not, however, place animals and other non-human aspects of creation in a free-fire zone. The tradition also includes the notion of stewardship, wherein the gifts of creation are put here for our use, not abuse. Stewardship also places the onus for securing better treatment of animals on human beings, where it obviously belongs, whereas with a "rights" basis it is considered an anomaly that the oppressed animals are not participating in their own advocacy.

TIMOTHY J. MILLER
Okemos, Michigan

To the editors:
Robert Wright's otherwise excellent article on animal rights falls somewhat short on the question of the role played by utilitarian considerations in moral reasoning. Wright seems to see the argument for animal rights as a "straight" utilitarian one (i.e., that there is no convincing reason to *not* factor animal suffering and death into the "utilitarian calculus"). In fact, utilitarian considerations rarely represent the only variable in a moral equation. Imagine someone proposing that ten human subjects be injected, against their will, with the AIDS virus in order to test a vaccine that promised to save tens of thousands of other human lives. This would be a utilitarian bargain, but quite obviously also a great moral evil. If the subjects were volunteers, however, the moral equation would be drastically altered.

It is clear that at least in some cases, an additional variable besides the utilitarian one must be considered in our moral decision-making: namely, whether a being subjected to suffering and death is *coerced*. Suffering and death are sometimes a simple matter of falling victim to bad fortune, but to be coercively subjected to suffering and/or death is to be the victim of an act of *violence* (in Kant's terms, to be treated as merely a means to an end rather than as an end in oneself).

Wright cites as an example of animal experimentation that seems "justified by any reasonable utilitarian calculus" the inducing of diarrhea in laboratory mice as part of a research project that could help save the lives of thousands of children in the Third World. The problem, of course, is that a simple "utilitarian calculus," however "reasonable," is not sufficient for responsible moral decision-making. The Third World children are tragic victims of a terrible sickness, while the mice are victims of *violence*. If it is morally justifiable to experiment on the mice (I would tend to think that in this case it probably *is* justifiable), a straight utilitarian calculus of the kind suggested by Wright does not yield the justification.

JOSEPH K. COSGROVE
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:
Robert Wright's argument for rights of sentient beings has an additional application: to fetuses. Under the metaphysics of their human status and the ethics of women's rights to medical treatment lies doubt about their lack of sentience. In fact, it is quite possible that a fetus is sentient within a few weeks of conception. At least, it would be surprising if it were unable to feel pain during the entire gestation period. A consistent ethic might grant the fetus the benefit of the doubt here.

Presumably, emotionally incendiary legal applications follow. The important point is to acknowledge our role in other beings' pain, and, like Wright, let ourselves be changed by that knowledge.

JOHN E. MURRAY
Columbus, Ohio

To the editors:
The most troublesome parts of the animal rights positions are their ultimately anthropocentric moralizing and their inability to set limits. If meat is murder, I wonder if non-human carnivorousness is similarly criminal. In a more righteous future, will tigers be taught to graze or will they be prosecuted? When a non-human carnivore expresses remorse for its prey, I will gladly grant that we must stop bovicide and similar crimes against our then sentient co-inhabitants.

Regarding limit-setting, it is indeed hard to draw lines between mammals and crustaceans (veal and lobster). It is hard to feel much identification with the plight of invertebrates. Conversely, cestodes and trematodes appear to have little compunction about dining on humans. I don't doubt we would all be better off eating less, but I find myself believing that our wiser forebears were on to something when they noted a spiritual difference between ourselves and the other creatures.

STEPHEN C. ROSS
Kalamazoo, Michigan

To the editors:
Fred Barnes misidentifies Jane Goodall as a "scientist famous for her studies of

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 16, 1990

TERRORISM LITE

Three times a year, by congressional mandate, the Bush administration must issue the Palestine Liberation Organization a report card, a written assessment of how closely it has abided by Yasir Arafat's forswearing of terrorism in December 1988. The first of these came in mid-March, and the PLO passed with flying colors. The State Department report asserts at the outset "that the PLO has adhered to its commitment . . . to renounce terrorism." Most who follow the Middle East will wonder about the honesty of such an unnuanced verdict, and even the uninitiated observer would have only to read the rest of the report to become similarly skeptical. Yes, it goes on to concede, at least nine of the thirty attacks launched against Israel by Palestinians since the PLO renounced terrorism have "involved constituent groups of the PLO." But this isn't to say, you understand, that the PLO hasn't kept its word.

The convolutions through which State Department logicians reached this conclusion are instructive. In most of these nine "border and rocket attacks," the report noted, "the intended target of the attack was unclear," and therefore can't be presumed to include civilians; thus it is impossible to say on which side of the PLO's fine line between "armed struggle" and "terrorism" these attacks fall. True, three PLO attacks were undeniably directed at civilians, such as a rocket attack on a border town in which an Israeli child was wounded (or "lightly wounded," as the report put it). But "we have no evidence . . . that the actions were authorized or approved by the PLO Executive Committee or by Arafat personally." Well, no, we don't. Even the new, upstanding Yasir Arafat hasn't yet opened the PLO's executive deliberations to C-SPAN. By this absurd standard of proof, it would be hard to prove that the PLO was *ever* involved in terrorism in a big way.

Now, it is true that the PLO isn't IBM, and that this chairman can't control the behavior of everyone who carries his logo. Though the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—both of which have plainly persisted in terrorism—occupy seats on the PLO's executive board, they are hardly Arafat's subordinates. (And still less is Arafat able to yank the leash of many fundamentalist militant Palestinians within the occupied territories, whose violence—which includes, by the way, the annual murder of many Palestinians suspected of collaboration—may in some sense be directed as pointedly at Arafat as at Israel.) But bear in mind that various Palestinian terrorists once thought to be rogue groups—remember Black September?—turned out to be part of Fatah, Arafat's own PLO faction. Moreover, the U.S. dialogue that was officially sanctioned at the end of 1988 was not framed as being with Fatah alone, but with the PLO.

Besides, to get bogged down in a debate over what Arafat can and can't control, what he did and didn't approve, is to miss much of the point. The central, irrefutable, and intrinsically troubling fact is that since Arafat renounced terrorism, though Fatah itself has scaled down its direct involvement in terrorism, and *perhaps* ended it (Israel not implausibly contends otherwise), PLO factions have regularly been launching attacks against Israel. That means one of two things: either Arafat isn't trying to keep the PLO away from terrorism, or he isn't capable of doing so. Either way, one is forced to ponder the value of doing business with this man.

Of course, these two hypotheses aren't mutually exclusive, and both, as a matter of fact, have some truth. Still, there is value in distinguishing between them; it helps isolate what is most wrongheaded about the administration's bowdlerizing of the PLO's recent record.

The apparent aim is to keep the peace process alive. The decision in late 1988 to open communications with the PLO was premised on its continued renunciation of terrorism, and Secretary of State James Baker's fear seems to be that casting much doubt on Arafat's fidelity to this oath might lead Congress to step in and end the dialogue. So Baker chooses, in the name of the greater good, to see no evil.

This is dishonesty of the worst kind: the unproductive kind. Consider again our two hypotheses. To the extent that Palestinian terrorism continues because of

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Arafat's sheer impotence, things look bleak for the Middle East's immediate future in any event. For the Palestinian problem ever to reach peaceful resolution, Palestinians must have enough political coherence to entrust one person, or one organization, or at least one reasonably unified coalition, with their voice. Obviously, if Arafat and the PLO don't fit that bill, no one else now does. To be sure, if the peace process acquires momentum, and Arafat comes closer to the prize of real Palestinian statehood, his power within the PLO may in some measure grow. And certainly, in that regard, the lack of recent progress is far from being all Arafat's fault; the Israeli government hasn't been showering the Palestinian people with auspicious overtures. But the larger point remains: to the extent that the State Department is right—that Arafat lacks the power to sharply curtail PLO terrorism—things look unpromising regardless of what the State Department does or doesn't say.

To the extent, on the other hand, that Arafat is able but unwilling to stifle terrorism, then things may look better—but only if his attitude changes. It is in this light that the danger of the administration's sophistry is most glaring. Obviously, if Arafat doesn't get his hand slapped when a few PLO missiles find their way into an Israeli town, missiles are likely to keep flying. And once they stop "lightly wounding" and start killing, lasting peace will be more remote than ever.

Actually, the State Department says it *has* slapped Arafat's hand. Shortly after insisting that he can't be blamed for the PLO's behavior, the report states: "We have made it clear to the PLO that these activities raise serious questions about the PLO's commitment to renounce terrorism. We are disappointed that the PLO has not found a more authoritative way to distance or disassociate itself from activities undertaken by constituent groups acting independently. . . ." Disappointed? At the first official meeting between the United States and the PLO, in December 1988, the United States warned that the new dialogue would be ended if terrorism "by the PLO or any of its factions" continued, and it stressed that the PLO would be expected to condemn publicly all Palestinian terrorism. Now, fifteen months later, PLO factions have persisted in terrorism, and Arafat and his colleagues have done their best to avoid clearly condemning it. (Last summer, after fourteen passengers on an Israeli bus were killed by a Palestinian terrorist, Bassam Abu Sharif, a close adviser of Arafat's, said, "This is not terror. Shamir and his government are the terrorists.") And now the United States declares itself to be *disappointed* with the PLO's performance? How about an expression of, say, outrage? Or perhaps even words to this effect, stated publicly: "If terrorist attacks by the PLO continue at their present rate over the next year, we will have to reassess the value of sustaining a dialogue with the PLO."

The administration's aversion to issuing a warning even this fuzzy seems to lie in its fear that the bluff will be called: if Arafat can't or won't stifle terrorism, then the United States will sooner or later have to make good on its threat to stop talking to him, thus throwing a wrench into the works. But again, if Arafat is unable, even under pressure, even after the application of whatever political lubricant he possesses, to make the machine run, then the works are pretty thoroughly messed up to begin with. One more wrench is unlikely to hurt appreciably, and it could end up helping.

CHICKEN VILNIUS

The Soviet Union's escalating pressure on Lithuania is being widely described as a series of chess moves, but it looks increasingly like a one-sided game of chicken. Assurances that military force will not be used continue to pour forth from Moscow. Now, however, these assurances are accompanied by a chilling caveat. "President Gorbachev indicated to me," Senator Edward Kennedy said after a meeting in the Kremlin, "that the position of the Soviet government was that there would be no use of force unless lives were threatened." That's a loophole tanks have been driven through before.

In fact, Soviet paratroopers have already smashed into a Lithuanian hospital to beat and seize Lithuanian army deserters who had sought refuge there. Soviet soldiers have seized the headquarters of the Lithuanian Communist Party, leaving its pro-independence, breakaway leaders in a state of what one of them called "stupefaction." And Soviet military installations have been directed to impound the hunting rifles and shotguns of Lithuanian citizens. So force is already being "used," though no one is getting killed. Not yet.

Lithuania's gentle pianist-president, Vytautas Landsbergis, is angry—and not just at Mikhail Gorbachev. "The U.S. sold us out," he said. "We know who we are dealing with, but the West does not." And he invoked the memory of 1939, when the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact awarded his country to Stalin and the West did nothing: "All we can do is raise the question to democracies of the West: Are they willing once again to sell out Lithuania?"

The answers coming out of Washington have not been reassuring. As Landsbergis spoke, Bush administration spokesmen were busy "softening" their stance. The administration has displayed annoyance with the Lithuanians for being impolitic, as have some members of Gorbachev's radical democratic opposition in Moscow, who worry that they themselves might get caught in a hard-line backlash. But politic or impolitic, the Lithuanians are, to put it mildly, within their rights.

If indeed there is a struggle in the Kremlin between those who want to crush Lithuania and those who want to let it go, then Washington (and the Western countries generally) had better exert itself to ensure that the crushers do not prevail. The post-Tiananmen Square approach—say tut-tut and then rapidly scuttle back to

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business as usual—won't do if there is a bloodbath in Lithuania. Western public opinion won't permit it. Matters, admittedly, are at a delicate stage. But "softening" in the name of what Landsbergis bitterly calls "larger interests" is the wrong message. Bush would do better to make it clear to both sides in the Kremlin that, like it or not, the cold war armistice is very much at stake in Vilnius.

NOTEBOOK

YOU READ IT HERE FIRST:
"I do not like broccoli. And I haven't liked it since I was a little kid and my mother made me eat it. And I'm president of the United States. And I'm not going to eat any more broccoli!" —George Bush, March 22, 1990

"The American people were asked to choose between a candidate whose theme was, 'We're all right, Jack,' and a candidate who said, 'Eat your broccoli.' " —William Schneider, explaining the results of the 1988 election in the December 5, 1988, ("Recriminations") issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC

ARS GRATIA ARTIS: Credit must be given where credit is due, and credit this week is due President Bush and his chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, John E. Frohnmayer. In testimony explicitly endorsed by the White House, Frohnmayer put the administration firmly on record in favor of repealing the statutory ban on funding for prose, poetry, and painting "that may be considered obscene." This ban, as we argued last week ("Indecent Request"), is silly, demagogic, and generally unworthy of a free country. Good for Bush et al. for finally getting up the gumption to court the wrath of Senator Jesse Helms, its author. Frohnmayer even had the temerity to criticize by name the American Family Association and Pat Robertson's "700 Club" TV show, pointing out to the members of the House Subcommittee on Post-secondary Education that the intemperate mail they have been getting on this subject is a function not of widespread public outrage but rather of the organizing abilities of these two religious-right groups. Now it's Congress's turn. Only when the House and Senate have followed the White House's lead will the shades of Whitman, Lawrence, Balthus, and Picasso, and the modern pretenders to their thrones, be able to rest easy.

GOOD PROSPECTS: We've long seen a niche—no, make that a need—for a serious quarterly journal that would treat policy issues, especially domestic policy issues, from a robustly liberal point of view. So we're pleased about the birth of *The American Prospect*, and we're happy to add our good wishes to the bracing welcome extended by TRB (see page 4.) The names of the new venture's co-editors and the chairman of its editorial board—Paul Starr, Robert Kuttner, and Robert B. Reich, respectively—are not exactly unfamiliar to TNR readers. In the future *The American Prospect* will have to pay for promotional announcements in this magazine out of what we trust will be an ample advertising budget, but this one's free: subscriptions ($25 for people, $15 for students, $60 for "institutions") may be had from P.O. Box 7645, Princeton, New Jersey 08543-7645.

KIWIS NON GRATA: The Bush administration isn't usually picky about which foreign leaders it socializes with. The president and secretary of state were glad to clasp hands with kleptocrat Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire when he visited not long ago. And they sent Brent Scowcroft all the way to Beijing to meet leading Chinese cutthroats. Yet to emissaries of the small island nation of New Zealand, all doors are barred. When Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer was in New York recently for a session of the U.N. General Assembly, senior U.S. officials refused to meet with him. Their rudeness was the result of a U.S. decision in 1986 to punish New Zealand for its anti-nuclear policy, which bars from its ports and airstrips nuclear-powered submarines and planes carrying nuclear weapons. Having made its point many times over, the administration is now showing a strange vindictiveness toward a country that is, after all, a friend and ally. As Representative Stephen Solarz puts it, "It is ludicrous to claim that a legitimate disagreement over nuclear policy provides justification for a prolonged diplomatic snub." Despite our freeze-out, New Zealand refused to join a vote condemning the invasion of Panama and continues to ally itself with U.S. interests by supporting emerging Asian democracies. Perhaps if Prime Minister Palmer wants to regain the favor of the United States he should try mowing down a few dissidents in a public square.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Robert Wright's article on animal rights ("Are Animals People Too?" March 12) is breaking post office box records. More than eighty of our readers have written in, the great majority to complain that Wright had lost his marbles in deciding that animals deserve moral consideration by virtue of their sentience alone (see page 6 for notable examples). Unsurprisingly, religious believers (eight percent of the total) made the most vociferous objections to an avowedly secular analysis, citing biblical authority to justify humanity's unique position within the animal kingdom. Close behind in emotional intensity were doctors and people associated with medical research (fifteen percent), some of whom went so far as to worry that Wright's premises threatened to undermine medicine itself: "If sentience . . . were the real issue, medical and public health procedures that produce pain would be morally indefensible," wrote Alan Epstein of the University of Pennsylvania. Quite a few correspondents (eleven percent) disliked the thought experiment in-

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volving insentient but intelligent automatons, and many of them, oddly, seemed to think that it mattered whether this experiment could ever actually be conducted. Other critics (eleven percent) noted that some animals—tigers, sharks, etc.—are themselves no respecters of animal rights: Why should the human species alone bear the burden of a sweeping conception of moral responsibility? Finally, a band of serious moral philosophers (twelve percent) entered the fray armed with the related Kantian notion that moral value properly belongs only to those who themselves assume ethical responsibilities. Our thanks to all who got worked up over the subject.

VIVA CHARLIE PETERS: According to *Granma*, the weekly English-language edition of the Cuban Communist Party's official organ (now dated Year 32 of the Revolution), Fidel's marathon speeches are invariably punctuated by (APPLAUSE), (PROLONGED APPLAUSE), and (SHOUTS OF "FOR SURE, FIDEL, GIVE THE YANKEES HELL!"). Delegates to the 16th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions became even more vociferous, however, on the subject of reform. "Capitalist reforms?" Castro asked the packed Karl Marx Theater. (EXCLAMATIONS OF "NO!") "Bourgeois reforms?" (EXCLAMATIONS OF "NO!") Then the kicker: "Neoliberal reforms?" (EXCLAMATIONS OF "NO!" "NEVER!") Forget exploding cigars. Forget Radio Marti. We should torment Castro with a free subscription to *The Washington Monthly*.

TURKISH HORROR: After an acrimonious fight, the Senate has again dropped a bill sponsored by Robert Dole that would designate an official day of remembrance marking the Armenian genocide of 1915-23. The argument against the resolution, articulated by Sam Nunn and others, is that we cannot afford to upset the Turks, our NATO allies, who are sensitive about the subject and deny that a mass killing ever took place. This concern is greatly overstated. Turkey, which receives $500 million in military aid annually, is not about to drop out of NATO because of a symbolic resolution. But never mind that. Robert Byrd attacks the resolution for asking the Senate "to endorse a particular view of these events and to take sides in a historical debate." This is the historical scoundrel's last refuge: we can't commit ourselves until we know what happened. In fact, we do know what happened: a million or more Armenians died in concentration camps in the years during and after World War I. Turkey's denials do not make this a historical debate. Just an attempt at historical deceit.

STANDING CROUCH: We are pleased to note that Stanley Crouch's *Notes of a Hanging Judge*—a collection of essays and reviews written over the last decade, several of them for us—has been published by Oxford University Press. •

'Toxic masculinity' and other male troubles.

THE GENDER RAP

By Daniel Gross

All is not well with roughly half the human race. Males commit a lot of violence, have trouble expressing their feelings, and get screwed over in divorce court. Fed up with the injustice of it all, some men have taken matters into their own hands: academics are giving the male species a thorough interdisciplinary analysis; male feminists are trying to mold men into more benign beings; Free Men are working on changing "discriminatory" laws; and Mythopoetic Men are trying to get men in touch with their preindustrial masculinity. New terms, some touchy-feeliness, plenty of scapegoats, and a fair amount of infighting—yes, we finally have a men's movement. It lacks only national recognition and an ism of its own.

The most visible aspects of the movement are men's studies classes. Nearly 200 schools, from Amherst to the University of Wisconsin, now offer a men's studies class, typically called "The Psychology of Men" or "Sociology of the Male Experience." Last year more than 100 scholars attended the first annual Men's Studies Conference.

Men's studies scholars think behavioral traits and sociological problems particular to males have been ignored in academe. Professors apply questions traditionally asked about the human condition to the *man* condition. "Men's studies is focusing on what it means to *be* a man," says James Doyle, a psychology professor at Roane State Community College in Tennessee.

A representative course is "Men and Masculinities," taught by Harry Brod, a Kenyon College men's studies specialist who has edited several scholarly collections—most recently, *A Mensch among Men: Explorations of Jewish Masculinity*. The course covers the importance of sports in male identity, paternal relationships, the portrayal of men in literature, and men's attitudes toward pornography. Brod also devotes individual sessions to the biological, sociological, and psychological dimensions of the transition from boyhood to manhood. Such courses don't generally have a political agenda, but students do learn about "male liberation"—i.e., the freeing of men from traditional, confining gender roles.

Doyle chairs the growing 200-member Men's Studies Association and edits the *Men's Studies Review* (circulation 400). Most of the articles in the *Review* are pretty tough going. "The Developmental Journey of the Male College Student" delineates "limiting patterns" that define male students' gender roles. Among them are restrictive emotionality, obsessions with competition and

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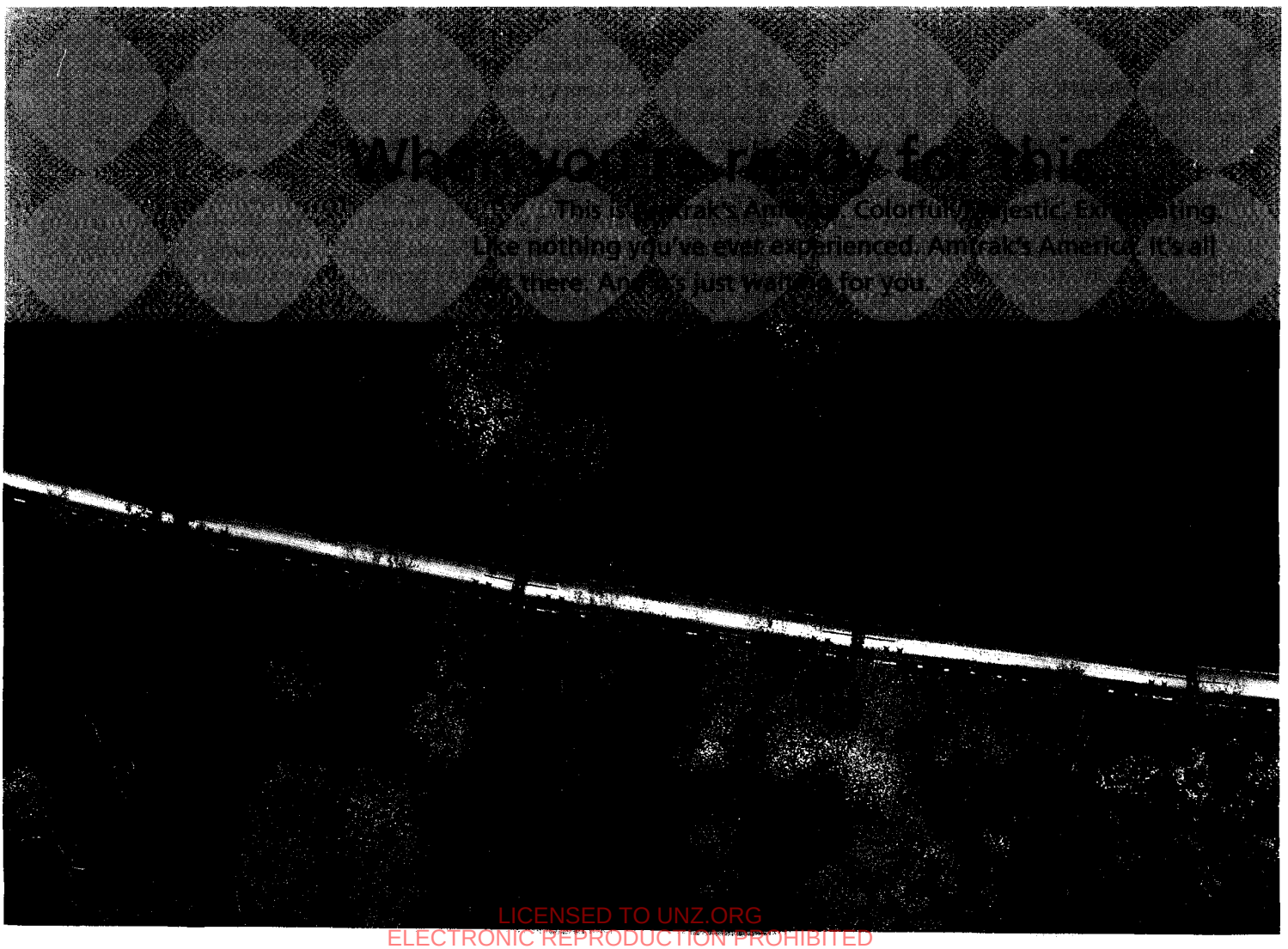
achievement, homophobia, etc. The author, a University of Oregon administrator, concludes that "we must further conceptualize the process of gender role consciousness and design intervention strategies that promote it." But there are exceptions. In "Some Working Men Eat Yogurt," Jack Loughary lucidly, if not eloquently, evaluates the behavior and self-awareness of construction workers who labor at his housing development. In some ways this sample consisted of stereotypical blue-collar workers—beer-drinking, roughhousing, homophobic tough guys. But these fellows also avoided foul language in the presence of women and shared their lunches. "A few even eat yogurt in public," Loughary writes. He concludes: "They think maleness is a silly term."

Of course, the methodology buttressing men's studies is largely feminist. "We're thoroughly indebted to women's studies scholarship," says Brod. Men's studies scholars—most of them sociologists and psychologists—have expropriated the feminist notion of gender as a power structure in politics, culture, and society. And to some degree, men's studies scholars dread the wrath of their precursors. "Most of us don't advocate having men's studies departments for fear of treading on the feminists," says Doyle.

Unlike the men's studies crowd, which just wants to contemplate the condition of men, feminist men want to do something about it. The National Organization for Changing Men is a gang of man-haters trapped in men's bodies. Although many members describe themselves as "feminists," NOCM co-chair Gordon Clay says, "Men can't be feminists because they are not females." Last year the group removed the words "male positive" from its statement of principles partly because NOCM felt people would construe the phrase as meaning "in support of all males including Ted Bundy."

The 500-member organization is avowedly political, albeit in a non-traditional sense. NOCM (rhymes with hokum) doesn't lobby or publicize causes, but holds workshops and discussion groups to, essentially, resocialize men, sensitizing them to the needs of women. "Men are socialized to put women down and devalue them," Clay says. "What we try to do is ask men to look at power and give up that power." First on the chopping block are the "patriarchal values" of oppression and violence. Recalling the case of Mark Lepine, the Canadian psychopath who killed fourteen women in Montreal last year, Clay wrote, "I think there's a little bit of him in all of us."

Male guilt is a sentiment completely alien to men's rights activists, sometimes referred to as Free Men. They're unabashedly male-positive, brazenly insensitive, real men. They hate male feminists, whom they accuse of gender treason. "Male feminists are like the men's auxiliary to the women's movement," sneers Fred Hayward, executive director of Men's Rights Inc. (a.k.a.



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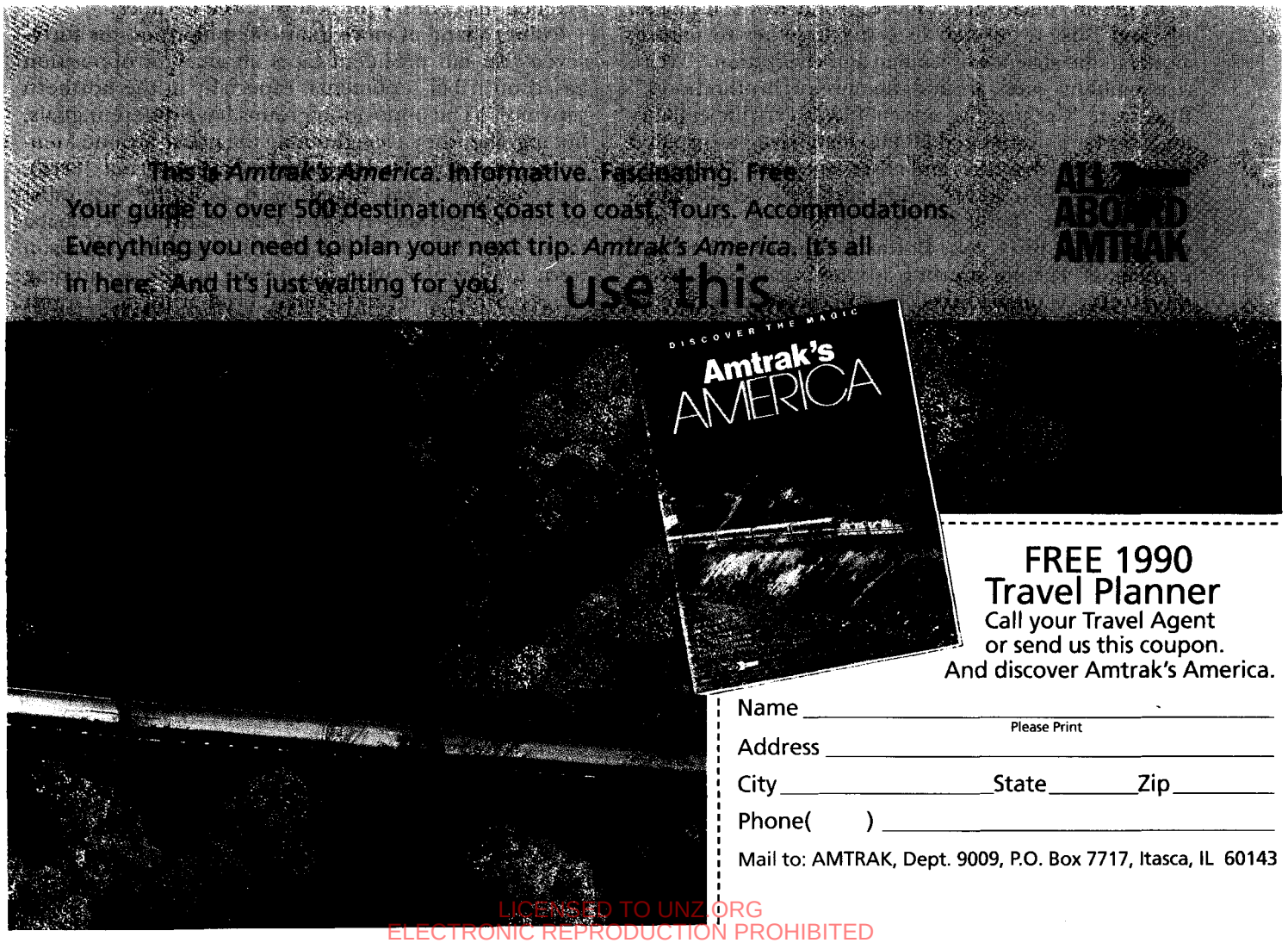
Mr. Inc.). "To call them part of the men's movement is like calling Phyllis Schlafly part of the women's movement." But Free Men hate female feminists more. It is "The Old Girls' Network" that is challenging traditional male dominance and turning the law against men.

Hayward generously concedes that women have suffered discrimination and may even deserve some relief. But today men are also plagued by sexism, gender bias, and objectification. "Women have reduced themselves to checking out men as providers. They check out our cars. This is dehumanizing." Free Men yearn for the days when women were docile creatures who quietly accepted their marginal roles. Now men's rights activists cotton to the notion that men are an oppressed minority (there are six million more women than men in the United States) and charge that America's current mores and laws are discriminatory. "Men have been held up to expectations and forced into certain roles," complains Tom Williamson, president of the 2,000-member National Coalition for Free Men. For example, whereas feminism has given women more rights and freedoms, men are still responsible for taking the initiative in relationships, fighting wars, and paying alimony and child support.

In 1983 Sidney Siller, a New York lawyer, was enraged enough about divorce laws to found the National Organization for Men, "to raise the consciousness about the plight of men." NOM now consists of 8,000 vocal, angry men, many of them divorced. Its main legislative goal is the enactment of a uniform set of custody laws that would remedy the rampant discrimination. As evidence of judicial bias, Siller cites the fact that women retain custody of the children after eighty-five percent of all divorces, while fathers get sole possession after about ten percent (five percent end in some form of joint custody). Of course, these statistics obscure the fact that men seldom apply for physical custody of their children and actually fare quite well in the small percentage of contested divorce cases, as Lenore Weitzman showed in her book *The Divorce Revolution*.

Even more painful to Free Men, though, is the burden of paying onerous child support. I asked Siller about Weitzman's claim that as women have entered the work force in greater numbers, average child support awards have decreased. He says her figures are "incorrect" but offers none of his own in response, and dismisses the volume as feminist propaganda. "It's a very dangerous book."

Divorce law reforms are just one part of a larger NOM crusade to re-empower men. "Men have been wimpified. They've been emasculated. We'd like to see them fight for their rights," says Siller. To this end NOM holds Father's Day demonstrations, has tried, unsuccessfully, to join all-female clubs, and gives out NOM Wimp of the Year awards (this year's front-runner is Pat Schroeder).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Finally, there are the Mythopoetic Men, who meld elements from men's studies, feminist men, and the Free Men into a unified theory. Mythopoetic philosophy, as expounded by the poet Robert Bly, spiritual father of the movement and the subject of a recent ninety-minute Bill Moyers special, posits that modernization, urbanization, industrialization, and the feminist movement have distanced men from their earthy, rough, natural masculinity. So men now quietly grieve over unknown inner wounds. As the wispy, white-haired Bly told Moyers, "I think the grief that leads to the men's movement began maybe 140 years ago, when the Industrial Revolution began, which sends the father out of the house to work." With their fathers absent, sons do not receive any knowledge of "what the male mode of feeling is."

For the mythopoets, ideal manhood existed in ancient times and the Middle Ages, as depicted in the works of Homer, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and other popular myths. These self-assured men of yore, strong yet sensitive, hugged one another, cried, were mentors for adolescents, and played rough—perfect role models for today's confused men. "Since a lot of us have complaints with our dads, we have to skip a generation to our common ancestors," says Shepherd—né Walter—Bliss, a psychology professor who coined the term "Mythopoetic Man." King Arthur is a prototype mythopoetic "elder." More recent examples include Thoreau, Whitman, and Johnny Appleseed. Bly updates this list with the cellist Pablo Casals, "a wonderful male mother."

To get in touch with a more productive self-image, Bly and Bliss urge men to come together in nature, alone, in the absence of women and civilization. "We're reassembling men around themes of brotherhood," Bliss says. "Cooperative masculinity is very life enhancing." So far an estimated 50,000 men have participated in the retreats that Bliss and others sponsor. These men pay about $200 to get together and, well, act like men. "We drum, we chant, we recite poetry, we talk about our fathers," Bliss says. But according to one retreat participant, farting, crawling around on all fours, wrestling, crafting animal masks, and butting heads were de rigueur for the weekend.

Bliss has a divinity degree from the University of Chicago, several years of postdoctoral work at Harvard, a radio talk show, and numerous articles to his credit. He also fancies himself something of a neologist. He recently coined the term "toxic masculinity" to describe that part of the male psyche that is abusive. "I use a medical term because I believe that like every sickness, toxic masculinity has an antidote."

Antidote? There's no cure. Masculinity is a terminal condition. And although it's operable, precious few men choose a surgical escape. But the academics, masculine squishes, and macho men who constitute the nominal men's movement will continue to compulsively think, write, talk, and complain about their problems. Men would probably be better off if they emulated the yogurt-eating construction workers examined by Loughary. "These men appear to enjoy being men. My impression is that they do not think about being men." •

Another doomed totalitarian.

HUNGER FOR POWER

By Louis Rapoport

Ethiopia, described by the World Bank as the world's most wretched country, is an eviscerated land of epic horror, terrorized by a mustachioed tyrant some call "the Stalin of Africa." While tens of millions of his countrymen live in poverty—Ethiopia's average per capita income is $70 a year—Mengistu Haile Mariam sits on a velvet throne in Haile Selassie's old palace and is served by liveried butlers and footmen. He plays tennis every Sunday on the palace court, surrounded by cheering ministers. (No one dares to beat him.) They gauge his temper by looking at his cheeks, which tremble before an eruption. But now Mengistu appears to be yet another doomed totalitarian, despite his success in crushing a coup attempt by his own army last May and his reluctant moves toward a settlement of a civil war that has plagued his country for almost three decades.

Ruling a land of more than 100 minorities, the forty-seven-year-old president faces an array of opposition based on tribal sentiments, especially in the northern provinces. The opposition groups have different goals, but together they are tightening the noose around Mengistu. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the country's largest and most powerful separatist movement, has waged a civil war against Addis Ababa for twenty-eight years. Last April at Afabet, a garrison town in central Eritrea, the rebels scored a stunning victory over Mengistu's demoralized army, the largest in black Africa. The EPLF killed some 8,000 Second Army troops, took 10,000 prisoners, and captured $1 billion in Soviet war matériel. This forced Mengistu to the negotiating table, where Jimmy Carter has been trying to serve as the honest broker between Ethiopia and the EPLF. (The first round of peace talks were held last July in the unlikely setting of Atlanta, Georgia.)

In late February, while the latest round of talks was in progress, the EPLF launched a massive surprise attack and captured most of the Red Sea port of Massawa. As the British journalist Colin Legum noted, this huge battle rated about four lines in the "news in brief" columns of most Western newspapers, "yet it could turn out to be one of the major events in the history of postwar Africa," changing the entire political configuration of the Horn of Africa. Since the Eritreans have introduced into the negotiations Malatesta's philosophy "if you want peace, make war," the peace talks have naturally suffered a setback, leaving Men-

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gistu with little more than a toehold in Eritrea.

The Eritrean gains have greatly increased the importance of Mengistu's talks with rebels in the neighboring province of Tigre. The Tigrean People's Liberation Front—whose members are even more fanatically Marxist-Leninist than Mengistu's men and want not secession, but another revolution—virtually controls this key northern province and is said to be within 180 miles of Addis Ababa. Ethiopia has been negotiating with the Tigreans, discussing a cease-fire and Tigrean demands for more political power for their province and for their party. The latest round of talks, held on March 21 in Rome and presided over by mediators from Italy and Kenya, produced an agreement for full-scale negotiations sometime in the near future to end this fifteen-year-old conflict.

Meanwhile, Mengistu is losing friends abroad. Gorbachev told him a year ago that the Kremlin, which from 1977 to 1989 had poured a total of $11 billion into his war economy, will not renew its military treaty with Addis Ababa, which expires in 1991. And the Soviets withdrew the last of their advisers in Eritrea on December 15. The once dependable Fidel Castro, whose picture hangs in Mengistu's office alongside Lenin's, has withdrawn 10,000 Cuban combat troops from the Eritrean front. The East German secret service, the HVA, which saved Mengistu's life during the May coup attempt, has pulled out of Ethiopia as well.

MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But Mengistu has found a surprising source of support. In November Ethiopia announced the resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel after sixteen years. Since then, Israel has supplied the Ethiopian army with advisers and military trainers (reportedly replacing the East Germans) and with small arms (one account reports 150,000 bolt-action rifles). Some Western officials believe Israel has even been sending cluster bombs to Ethiopia, judging from the type of damage the army has inflicted in some areas under attack. Israel has officially denied this charge. In exchange for Israeli support, Mengistu has said he will allow most of the 15,000 remaining Jews in Ethiopia to reunite with their families, who were airlifted to Israel from the Sudan in 1984-85.

Some of Mengistu's foes contend that he is afraid to end Ethiopia's various wars because that would lead to demands for demobilization of the 350,000-man army, which could constitute a threat to his power. But Mengistu may agree to a federation with Eritrea, reportedly believing that the Eritreans would then divide along religious lines (most of the two million Eritreans are Muslim, but the 300,000 Christians have been the movement's driving force) and would have just enough freedom that they'd start shooting at each other, instead of at him. Mengistu needs to resolve his Eritrean problem quickly because the war is draining his treasury—the vacuum left by the Soviet and Cuban pullout is all too apparent. One way or another, he intends to hold on to Eritrea, which is vital to his country both culturally and economically.

Eritrea, cradle of the ancient Axumite empire and for centuries an integral part of Ethiopia, was colonized by the Italians (in 1892) and then the British until 1952, when under a U.N. accord it became "an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian crown." The fifty years of Italian occupation established a commercial, educational, and industrial infrastructure in Eritrea that colonial-free Ethiopia still lacks. More than thirty percent of Ethiopia's industry and commerce is concentrated in Eritrea—mainly in the ports of Assab and the embattled Massawa, and in the region's capital, Asmara, a lively, spotless Italian-built city cupped by towering mountains and accessible only by a serpentine road running down to the Red Sea or by air from Addis.

On November 15, 1962, Emperor Haile Selassie forced the Eritrean Assembly to vote for total reunification with Ethiopia, and thus turned a sputtering little Eritrean secessionist group into a popularly supported national movement. The overthrow of the emperor in 1974 only fueled the Eritreans' drive for independence.

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Mengistu, his successor, had thousands of civilians killed as suspected "collaborators," a policy that swelled the EPLF's ranks even more. In March 1976 Mengistu organized a ragtag crusade, a march on Eritrea by an army of Ethiopian peasants armed with ancient weapons. More than 25,000 of them perished. In 1977 he set up secret death squads whose members strangled hundreds of Eritrean civilians in "Operation Piano Wire." This caused masses of Eritreans to flee into the countryside, where they joined the rebels. The population of Asmara dropped from 200,000 to 90,000.

Brute force has endured as the mainstay of Mengistu's administrative policy. In the past five years he has ordered the forced resettlement of between 8 million and 14 million Ethiopians from the rebellious and overpopulated northern provinces. Peasants have been transported from the high mountains of the north to the Sudan border in the lowland west, where they die in droves of dehydration, dysentery, and malaria. The Western media came in to show the world the Great Famine of 1984-85, when as many as 1.5 million died in a drought that was exacerbated by Mengistu's policy of denying relief to severely stricken areas because of their possible support of rebels. At the height of the famine Mengistu told members of his Central Committee: "This is nature's way of keeping the balance . . . temporary natural setbacks will not deter us from our final objective of building communism!"

Mengistu reportedly continues to order mass executions of civilians in Eritrea, Tigre, and surrounding regions. In one 1988 massacre hundreds of famine-weakened peasants were forced into a shallow ditch and then crushed by Soviet T-55 tanks, according to Amnesty International. That year in Metekel district, near copper-tinted Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile, some 200 villagers were killed by security forces because of supposed links with a Marxist opposition force, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party. The Central Investigation Organ (the secret police) routinely rounds up thousands of Ethiopians—those who try to leave the army or the country, those who refuse to be resettled, and others—who are never heard from again.

The total number of fatalities due to resettlement, imprisonment, the withholding of famine relief supplies, warfare, and outright executions is now believed to exceed 2 million, out of a population of some 40 million. That's far short of the records set by Stalin, who is now blamed for 30 million to 40 million deaths out of a population of 170 million. But Mengistu is still trying. "Mengistu maintains his power like Stalin, through force, intrigues, and manipulation," writes Dawit Wolde Giorgis, a former Ethiopian deputy foreign minister who now lives in exile in the United States, in his book *Red Sea Tears*. "He rules by decree, enforcing his will through small groups of loyal henchmen, secret police, and terrorist squads placed in nearly every government agency." At mass rallies Mengistu is hailed like other balcony dictators, except that the Black Power salute has replaced the straight-armed heil Hitler. Secret police gauge the responses of the crowd, and no one dares to be anything less than fervid in cheering "Our Beloved Revolutionary Leader." Mengistu has a remarkable memory and never forgives or forgets anyone who has slighted him. The grounds of the imperial palace have been turned into a mass graveyard.

Though many consider him a classic paranoid, Mengistu is not deluded in his belief that his time is running out. Legions of bitter enemies would like to see him dead, and he has every reason to switch constantly among his twelve Land Rovers. Last May, while on an official visit to East Germany, during a meeting with the now deposed leader Erich Honecker, Mengistu was informed that the generals who headed his armed forces were leading a revolt against him. But with the help of East German secret policemen and General Tesfaye Wolde Selassie, Mengistu's Central Investigation Organ chief, the plot was foiled. In retaliation, Mengistu wiped out the cream of his officer corps (thus inadvertently aiding the rebel cause). According to American intelligence sources, the generals and scores of other top-ranking officers were beaten to death with wooden cudgels or cut in two by high-caliber machine-gun fire. Commander Demissie Bulto, whose Second Army included thousands of forcibly conscripted boys aged twelve to fourteen, was decapitated. His head was stuck on a pole, and his body was dragged through the streets of Asmara.

A generation ago the great Ethiopian novelist Dagnachew Worku summarized this land of hunger, violence, disease, and ignorance in one sentence: "Ethiopia is God's way of putting an end to things." This was written before the revolution, when Haile Selassie reigned in relatively benevolent despotism—"only" 200,000 died in covered-up famines and wars, "only" a few hundred were tortured to death in damp dungeons. Mengistu has expanded on this legacy.

But now, with his power slipping, he has moderated his brutality a bit. Late last year he released from prison six members of Haile Selassie's family after fifteen years, a nod to Amnesty International's pleas. He has allowed the Western media a little more access to his country, although it is still no more open than Albania. He is granting more people "permission" to travel to the big cities within their own country. He even says he will jump on the reform bandwagon sweeping the Communist world. On March 17 he told a visiting Canadian minister that he was about to announce a multiparty system as part of a major reform that was aimed at "dropping Marxism" and allowing private enterprise. But though he is trying hard to avoid the fate of Nicolae Ceausescu, diplomatic sources in Addis Ababa are betting that Mengistu will soon pay a similar price for his massive crimes against his own people.

LOUIS RAPOPORT's *Stalin's War Against the Jews* is forthcoming from The Free Press/Macmillan.

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HOLLYWOOD GOES HAVANA

By Merle Linda Wolin

In Hollywood these days it's chic to go to Cuba. Many of America's brightest filmmakers, including Oliver Stone, Sidney Pollack, and Spike Lee, have trekked to the Havana Film Festival. Others, such as Francis Coppola, Robert Redford, and George Lucas, have gone to lecture and to teach at an internationally known film foundation and school headed by Gabriel García Márquez, the celebrated Colombian writer.

Before I visited Cuba last spring I heard U.S. filmmakers praise the innovative nature of the project, emphasizing that the foundation and school didn't have anything to do with Cuba; they just happen to *be* in Cuba. I was prepared to be surprised. But after interviews with everyone from García Márquez to his former assistant at the school (who defected to the United States in 1988) to Hollywood celebrities, including Redford, it became clear that the Cubans and their friends are using a cultural project to legitimize one of the last bastions of Stalinist rule—and then roping in Hollywood to do the p.r.

The Foundation for New Latin American Cinema, the school's parent organization, was founded in April 1985 in Havana by activist Latin American *cineastes* with close ties to Cuba. New Latin American Cinema refers to what the *cineastes*, in the little-known first issue of their magazine of the same name, define as the "cinematographies of the continent," which are "sustained by the principles of sovereignty and unity against the principal enemy" (i.e., the United States). Shortly after the foundation was conceived, García Márquez, one of Castro's closest friends, became its president. Legally, contrary to what many in Hollywood have been led to believe, the project is purely Cuban. The foundation's charter states that the organization is "subject to the Civil Code, the laws, and the concordant dispositions of the Republic of Cuba, where it officially resides. . . ." Its goals are to promote all aspects of what it considers progressive filmmaking in Latin America, from production to distribution to conservation. To that end, it supports numerous film-related projects, including an exchange program with Robert Redford's Sundance Institute in Utah.

The financial structure has proved key to the project's success. Castro pays for the land, buildings, daily maintenance costs, the salaries of the more than 100 Cuban employees, including teachers, and a small allowance for each of the 160 full-time students and the approximately 300 part-time students. Lola Calviño, the school's chief administrator, said the annual peso budget amounts to about $2.3 million. Castro personally hands her the school's monthly allowance. Everything else in the project's budget, though—nearly all the items that must be paid for in hard currency, such as film equipment, airplane tickets, salaries for foreign instructors, etc.—must be raised outside Cuba by García Márquez and the foundation.

The list of foreign contributors is impressive. Redford, apparently unfazed by the prohibitions of the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba, raised more than $25,000 for the school in 1988 at a dinner party he gave for García Márquez in his Malibu home. García Márquez has donated more than $250,000 in book royalties, along with other large, unspecified sums, according to Cuban Alquimia Peña, the foundation's executive director. Numerous Latin American writers and directors have donated film or book royalties; UNESCO has donated more than $60,000 toward plane tickets; France has donated cameras, editing tables, and video equipment; Spain has given spare parts; universities in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Nicaragua have lent teachers; the Soviet Union has donated still cameras and film; Sundance has contributed workshop instructors; and the Pan African Film Federation has paid for student travel.

The school is located in the countryside outside Havana. Its three-year undergraduate program offers students, who come from all over the world but largely from Latin America, the standard courses needed to learn the artistic and technical skills of filmmaking, such as editing, directing, and sound. But it goes further than even some of its more distinguished rivals in the United States, by giving each student equal opportunity to make films and not forcing them to compete for scarce resources.

Besides García Márquez, a host of professionals from the United States, Latin America, and Europe have gone there to teach. From Hollywood alone, they include Coppola, who gave a workshop on screenwriting; Lucas, who taught students about special effects; Oscar-winning producer Jonathan Sanger (*Frances*, *The Elephant Man*), who worked with students on script market-

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ability; and, through the Sundance exchange program, director Tim Hunter (*River's Edge*) and writer Tom Rickman (*Coal Miner's Daughter*).

During my visit to the school I asked Argentine Hernan Invernizi, the school's press officer, to show me a sampling of the fifty-nine student documentaries made the previous year, including three films that had been highly controversial among the Cuban staff—one about homosexuality in Cuba, another about what will happen when Castro dies, and the third about the furtive lives of Havana's heavy-metal rockers. He played a tape of ten films for me, plus a promotional video about the school. The films were original and well done—one about the traditional lives of Chinese immigrants in Havana, another about a group of artists striving to express themselves in modern terms. But two of the controversial films were missing—the one about Castro's death, and the one on punk rockers. (The film on homosexuality, which was included, was surprisingly pro-Castro, explaining that discrimination against gays exists *Not Because Fidel Says So*, the title of the film, but because Cuban culture is deeply homophobic.) When asked what happened to the other films, Invernizi replied disingenuously: "They weren't there? Oh, well. They weren't that good anyway."

Another foreign staff member showed me *If Fidel Dies*, which he claimed was the most offensive to Cuban officials and came close to being banned. But the film seemed to reflect, if anything, an unquestioning acceptance of Castro and his more than thirty-year rule. When asked about the controversy, Calviño denied the Cubans considered prohibiting the film, though she explained they were extremely upset that a student "would touch on the theme of Fidel's death." "He's such a beloved person," she said, tears welling in her eyes. "Personally, I don't want to think about the subject, much less work on it."

So what happened to the films on the tape? Since a cornerstone of the school's international acclaim is that Cuba maintains a strict hands-off policy toward all school activities (students can watch films there that are prohibited in Cuba and can read books and periodicals not imported for the general population), officials wanted me to believe the films were omitted accidentally. But the Castro film was also missing from the school's annual catalog, as was a description of the film on homosexuality. What's more, some of Latin America's and Spain's best filmmakers, including Hector Babenco (*Kiss of the Spider Woman, Ironweed*), Pedro Almodóvar (*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*), and Academy Award-winning cinematographer Nestor Almendros (*Days of Heaven, Kramer vs. Kramer*), are routinely excluded from the school for either cultural or political nonconformity with Cuba. (All the films of Babenco and Almodóvar are banned in Cuba. Almendros's documentaries on human rights in Cuba are prohibited, and though his Hollywood work is screened, his name is often snipped from the credits.)

Calviño says the students tend to be "politically inclined" toward Cuba. Even so, how do they feel about being granted freedoms systematically denied just outside the gates? The responses ranged from ingenuous to cynical. One, however, was refreshingly honest. "I didn't have another way of studying with people like García Márquez, with Redford, or with Sanger," lamented Maria Navaro, a Mexican director who participated in workshops in Cuba and at Sundance. "Sure, it's very contradictory and ironic to do it in Cuba. . . . But in my country, I didn't have the educational possibilities with such people as I had there. And without them, I wouldn't have been able to do my film."

On the last day of my visit, I spoke with García Márquez, Gabo, as he is called. Calviño was present, and a student recorded the conversation. García Márquez spoke eloquently about film and its transcendent power, revealing a long-held passion to use the medium to transform Latin American—and American—political life. "You're going to think this is hogwash," he said. "But everything I've ever done, all the books I've written, everything I've done in this life, I did to be able to make movies."

In 1953 García Márquez became Colombia's first film critic at *El Espectador*, a Bogotá daily, and later studied filmmaking in Italy. There he became friends with Argentine Fernando Birri, now the film school's director, and several Cubans, including Julio García Espinosa, head of the Cuban Film Institute, and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Cuba's pre-eminent director (*Memories of Underdevelopment, Death of a Bureaucrat*). After his studies he went to Mexico. He had already written two books but was determined to break into movies because of their power to reach millions and because cinema, in his opinion, is a more complete creative medium. He got off to a slow start. His scripts and story ideas were always rejected, he said, and he was told repeatedly to forget filmmaking because his ideas would never reach people. "When they told me this," he recalled, "I pulled together all the stories they didn't want, tied them together, and wrote *One Hundred Years of Solitude*."

His experience with literature brought him back to film. He explained that when he first started writing, few people read Latin American novels. His first two books sold only about 700 copies each. But with the publication in 1965 of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Latin Americans in huge numbers started to read and appreciate their own novelists. North Americans and Europeans soon followed suit. "And today," he noted, "we're in the world."

Now García Márquez wants to duplicate that success with Latin American film. "Once we conquer our own audiences, our own markets, our films will be universal . . . ," he said. "The great power of Latin America . . . is its culture. The United States spends an enormous amount of money trying to penetrate culturally in Latin America. We don't spend a dime trying to penetrate culturally, yet we're changing the United States. . . . We're changing the language, the food, the music, a way of being," he said. "We're changing you into a Latin country. It's already happening in Miami, in New York, in Los

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Angeles, in the entire South. . . . What's more, [Latin American] culture is penetrating deep into the home, entering through television. We're getting in. Be careful. We've got you totally surrounded." García Márquez continued, saying he asks his political friends: "Why are you fighting with the United States if we're already winning? In our camp we'll never be able to be imperialists in the United States. . . . In fact, we have to impede you from doing this to us. So if movies are a sensational, mass cultural factor in all this, why should we stop it? And if I have the possibility of helping, with my experience in literature, why wouldn't I do it?"

Finally, García Márquez spoke about his close relationship with Redford and Coppola and their staffs. "Despite all the problems they have with the immigration service to come here, they still do it," he said. "They're helping us. We're resolving problems." (Redford and Coppola have been investigated by the CIA and the Treasury Department for possibly violating the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba, in effect since 1962, but no charges have been brought.)

At the end of the conversation, I decided to hold off asking García Márquez the tough political questions until he was home again in Mexico City in several weeks. With Calviño present—whom diplomats in Havana had told me doubles as a security agent—I didn't want to push my luck. Once in Mexico, however, García Márquez's assistant told me he would only continue the interview after the movie magazine *Premiere*, for which I was on assignment, paid out $10,000 and deposited the money in the foundation's account in Cuba.

Later, on the phone, García Márquez defended his wily demand by saying that television stations in England, Italy, and Germany had paid him for interviews in the past and that was one way he raised money for the foundation. When I said that U.S. publications regard such payments as unethical, he replied, "I consider myself a man more distinguished in ethics than in literature." As for the political implications of the film project in Cuba, he said flatly: "I won't respond to the political questions."

The film school and the role Hollywood plays were clearly assessed by Antoñio Valle Vallejo, García Márquez's former personal assistant at the school who defected to the United States while attending the Cartagena Film Festival. Valle, thirty-three, a former history and philosophy professor at the University of Havana who wrote film criticism on the side, claims the school is a thoroughly Cuban propaganda operation. Its principal objective, he says, is to use the film project to expand the Cuban political system in Latin America while improving the country's image in the world: "Only secondarily is the school about creating a Latin American cinema."

For the year and a half that Valle worked at the school, he was privy to many conversations with García Márquez, Castro, Peña, Calviño, and her husband, Film Institute director García Espinosa, among others. "They were all very clear about how to use art—film—to achieve their political objectives," he said. Valle also confirmed what diplomats had claimed: that nearly all the Cubans at the school and foundation—from top administrators like Peña and Calviño to secretaries and maintenance personnel—are civilian officials of the Interior Ministry, positioned at the school and foundation to "protect and promote Cuban interests." "It's cultural politics," he said, "which serve to export their ideology through art. And in one way or another, all the foreigners who pass through the school or the workshops leave with an image of Cuba, prefabricated."

When the subject turned to Hollywood, Valle made it clear how American filmmakers fit into Cuba's overall political design. To illustrate, he recounted how his former colleagues had spoken for months about getting Redford to Cuba. They figured that because of the star's interest in Latin American film, he would be "the most appropriate person to penetrate Hollywood." According to Valle, Castro, García Márquez, and others wanted to involve Redford in the school primarily to pave the way for his involvement in other Cuban cinematic ventures, such as possible Cuba-Hollywood co-productions. "The school is the hook for Hollywood," said Valle, "and in this case, Redford's the fish." Valle said his colleagues believed that through Redford they could accomplish several political objectives at once: circumvent the U.S. blockade; gain whatever economic, political, and social advantages such a relationship might produce; and improve the country's image abroad. The idea of using the respected celebrity to improve Cuba's image was particularly appealing. "He was considered perfect," recalled Valle, "because he's a star not from just any cinema, but from the *American* cinema, Cuba's declared enemy."

Redford's April 1988 visit to Cuba evidently went off without a hitch. He gave a speech at the school; visited top officials at the Film Institute; spoke with García Márquez about working together on a remake of *Walker*, director Alex Cox's story of the nineteenth-century American adventurer who briefly took over Nicaragua; tried unsuccessfully to buy the film rights to García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*; discussed shooting part of his upcoming film *Havana* in Cuba (the State Department later nixed the idea); and was fêted by García Márquez and Castro.

A farewell dinner for Redford was held in García Márquez's elegant mansion in Havana. Some twenty guests feasted on lobster, rum, imported whiskey, and wine. Fidel showed up around 11. He chatted with Redford, and the two evidently got on. Meanwhile, Valle said, Peña, Calviño, and García Espinosa—and later, García Márquez—congratulated themselves for having finally "conquered Redford." (After the visit Sundance indeed deepened its commitment to a cultural exchange with the foundation.)

So what does Hollywood have to say about these revelations? Coppola and Lucas declined to respond. (One of Coppola's close associates, however, said: "Francis doesn't see what we see. In Cuba he has a limo, servants, rum, he's smothered with affection. . . . And he thinks

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it's better to have contact with the Cubans than not.") Sanger said he had been impressed by the school, by the "people I met and their sincere desire to make movies that move the world, which is what I want to do." But he claimed he wasn't aware of any behind-the-scenes politics or the human rights situation. "If I would have felt that my trip was an endorsement of Castro's regime, if I knew enough about his public policy, I might have had second thoughts about it," he said.

Redford took a more guarded approach. He talked about his interest in Latin American culture, and explained he had contacted García Márquez first—long before his trip to Cuba—to ask him to participate in Sundance's Latin America program. The program, the institute's largest, was designed to help American filmmakers learn about the films and other arts of Latin America. "From the beginning, what we wanted from García Márquez is his storytelling ability," said Redford. "I also knew of his interest in film and realized he could help us connect with or identify Latin American filmmakers we could then invite to this country."

But getting García Márquez to Sundance wasn't easy. Redford said the author wouldn't accept his invitation until the State Department agreed to lift travel restrictions on his entry visa, imposed years ago under the infamous McCarran-Walter Act because of García Márquez's close associations with the Cuban government. So Redford went to Washington and lobbied two friends, Senators Bill Bradley of New Jersey and Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York. The restrictions were lifted.

Then the ball started rolling. García Márquez and his wife, Mercedes, visited Sundance for the first time in January 1988. After that, Redford accepted García Márquez's invitation to visit Cuba and the school. In November Redford held his fund-raiser for García Márquez and the school in Malibu. And in January 1989 Redford's U.S. Film Festival in Park City, Utah, screened García Márquez's *Difficult Love* series—six films based on García Márquez stories and co-written by the Nobel laureate himself—and the Latin American program was launched.

When Redford was asked how he felt about working in a totalitarian country, he said he found that particular part of it "disturbing," but that he found it "hopeful that freedom of expression exists in the school. That's a positive sign. I am puzzled they would give freedoms to some and not to others." He also noted that it's a "heartbreaking irony" that Cubans are in jail for their beliefs and for artistic expression, while people in the school are allowed complete freedom. "But I don't tie the school and Latin American film so much to the country," he said. "I treat the school as a satellite operation. Cuba doesn't interest me."

When told that the foundation and school might be propaganda fronts for Cuba and that he perhaps is being used, Redford seemed shaken. But he resisted the idea, because he said he's never seen anything overtly political in anything from either the foundation or the school. He said he also finds it hard to believe because his interest in García Márquez isn't political. "I don't even know his politics," he said. "We never discuss them." But in practically the same breath, he also said: "I'm sure my position is too shallow to know, since I wasn't there long enough, and I was being given the best-foot-forward tour of things. I saw that. When I came back and people said, 'What did you think of Cuba?' I said, 'Well, it's kind of hard to get a total perspective when you're being treated so well.' "

For most of the interview Redford insisted the project couldn't be political because nothing about it appears political. So I explained that if what the defector and others say is true, the school is primarily about propaganda, about helping the country make friends abroad rather than any overt political subterfuge. "Well, I see nothing wrong with artists making friends among themselves." he said ingenuously. "So if that was their aim, I don't see anything wrong with that." But would you make friends or participate in a film school in, say, South Africa, or Chile under Pinochet? "Well, well, I don't know," Redford stammered. "That's not a problem, so I don't have to face it. I'm not aware of this being Cuban. See, that's our problem we've got here." But can you imagine that Castro doesn't control the school when he controls everything else? "I just don't know. I'm not going to comment on Cuban politics because it doesn't interest me, and I think it's dangerous to speculate. I'm interested in Latin American art." In closing, Redford reiterated his faith in Sundance's exchange with the school. "I honestly believe it's a good idea," he said. "And I hope it can work." But he also seemed shaky. "Try to get a response from García Márquez," he encouraged. Then, a few moments later, he sounded nervous. "I hope this is not so," he said. "I just hope it's not so." And García Márquez? I wrote to him and laid out the defector's story. Once again, he declined to respond.

Cinematographer Almendros offered the shrewdest analysis of the project. Almendros, who lived in Cuba from age seventeen (when his family sought refuge in Havana from fascist Spain) to age thirty-one (when he sought refuge again, this time from Castro's regime), pointed out that some very good film schools have been created under dictatorships. He cited the school in Poland, where Roman Polanski studied, and the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Italy, which was founded by Benito Mussolini in the 1930s yet turned out the best anti-fascist filmmakers of the postwar era. "The technical quality of any education isn't political," he said.

The real test for the school, he predicts, will come from foreigners. The government is risking its control by exposing Cubans to non-Communists, who "don't have the same fears as people inside the country." Like other Spanish and Latin American filmmakers opposed to Castro's rule, Almendros thinks that the foundation and the school are basically good ideas. "Although I'm convinced the school is totally Communist, what may come out of it will not necessarily be Communist," he said. "So I would recommend it on selfish grounds. Because I'm sure anyone who goes there, if they stay long enough, they'll be anti-Castro." •

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After a decade in exile, back to the U.S.S.R.

NOT QUITE A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

By Vassily Aksyonov

I arrived in Moscow late on a fall evening. In my mind's eye I can still see three faces that appeared to me in succession at Sheremyetevo International Airport. In the walkway from the door of the Lufthansa plane stood a *tiotka*, a dumpy, shabbily dressed lady of indeterminate age. In Russian, when "*ka*" is added to the word for "aunt," it denotes an entirely distinct social status, a specific stratum of society that even a doctoral dissertation could not describe. I had not met a single *tiotka* since my departure from Russia nine-and-a-half years before: the cheerless, indifferent face, the rumpled woolen scarf on the head, the squat, unevenly hemmed overcoat, the scuffed-up boots. So there you were, dear comrade woman, unchanged since the 1930s, and suddenly you seemed such an exotic creature. . . .

Behind the *tiotka* (what was she doing there, on the very edge of the land of the Soviets? was the walkway her place of employment?) stood a stone-faced border guard with the rank of major: my second Moscow face. The lighting was dim, though it was hard to believe that the airport was scrimping on such trivialities as electricity—better, surely, to flood everything with light to impress the foreigners. I was about to learn that the time of Potemkin villages is over for good.

We entered the building amid a crowd of European passengers. Along the wall stood more border guards, and officials in civilian garb. Among them, a third face struck me by its pallor. It belonged to a young man in his twenties. It looked as if his face were powdered; and in this static mask one could imagine a little bit of everything, from a tortured inferiority complex to a reckless pride. Well, I thought, how about that? A "man from the underground" may now be found working in customs. My first Muscovites: the unhappy Soviet *tiotka*, the man straight out of a Dostoyevsky novel, and between them the border guard, as neutral as the Urals.

We had left Moscow from this same airport one July morning in 1980. It had just been built for the Olympic Games, and everything shone brightly. The other passengers had already boarded the Air France jet, but we were still being inspected at customs. No fewer than eight officials—no "men from the underground" among them in those days—searched our pitiful luggage. The motherland's last duty was to prevent this malicious writer from taking any flammable objects with him. The officials confiscated a folder thick with notes, letters, and news clippings: "Taking out any archival materials is prohibited." "If I cannot leave with these archival materials, as you choose to call them, then I will not leave at all," I said. The officials fell silent. With a nod of his head, the chief inspector sent one of his assistants somewhere.

The folder sat there alone on the metal customs counter as if awaiting vivisection. The assistant finally returned and whispered something in his superior's ear. It became clear that someone from above had cleared the archival materials for passage, if only to get rid of the archivist as quickly as possible. Three months after this scene, my Soviet citizenship was revoked by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, signed by Brezhnev, because of my "systematic damage to the prestige of the Soviet Union," and because of activities that "defamed the great title of citizen of the U.S.S.R." I thought I would never see my homeland again.

The decree revoking my citizenship has yet to be repealed, but nine-and-a-half years later this "ex-citizen" is returning to what the Stalinist poets used to call the capital of all hopes. (The invitation had come, however, from the American ambassador.) "Hello, Vassily Pavlovich! Welcome to Moscow!" The blinding lights of the TV cameras shine on me as young faces beam. Soviet television has begun filming me even before my arrival at passport control—that is, when I am still technically outside the Soviet Union. For the popular program "Look," it turns out, the "sacred border" is no longer sacred. A shouted question, the first: "Why did you come here by invitation of the American ambassador?"

Suddenly, a wiry KGB type rushes in with a walkie-talkie heavy enough to double as a blunt instrument. He pushes the lights aside and clamps his hand over the camera lens. "What's going on here? Who allowed you to film in this zone?" And so "zone" becomes one of the first words I hear in Moscow. It is one of the most common words in our language: "camp zone," "forbid-

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den zone," "restricted zone," "recreation zone," "friendship zone." Then something happens that is incredible to someone who had not been in the "U.S.S.R. zone" for nearly ten years.

What happens is that the TV people are neither discouraged nor frightened by the KGB man. They become, on the contrary, more excited and animated. "Shoot *him!*" the head cameraman shouts, pointing not at me but at the KGB officer. Looking back, the scene would seem a bit too tidily symbolic. But the symbolism is there. Two diametrically opposed social forces are in confrontation before me—those who want to tighten the zone and those who want to abolish it.

Five minutes later the higher authorities arrive. They say, "Vassily Pavlovich, my dear fellow, do forgive us, our colleague here overdid it." The interview begins again, and that same night everything—including the shouts, "Go into the zone, into the zone!"—is shown on the program that keeps half the population of the Soviet Union glued to the TV screen until two in the morning. "So why did you, a Russian writer, return to your homeland at the invitation of the American ambassador?" "First, because we and the Matlocks are neighbors in Georgetown. Second, because nobody else had invited me to my homeland."

Step by step we come closer to the border control. Behind it I see a thick wall of people awaiting the arriving passengers. Familiar faces already stand out. Finally we are there among them, passing from hand to hand, or rather in every hand at once; we are hugged, kissed, and patted by everyone who can reach us, and we hug, kiss, and pat everyone near us, even the journalists. But we no longer know who is who, journalists or friends.

The friends are old; the journalists are young. So I adopt a strategy of kissing the old ones and avoiding kissing the young ones, so as to limit my kissing to friends. But a couple of the young women reproach me: "Vasya, Vasya, don't you recognize me?" Then I recognize them: they are "beauties of days gone by," but they have had their faces lifted. Finally, I manage to reach my son and sister. The TV lights again beam on. Several crews are filming at once. Microphones and tape recorders are thrust forward over people's heads. Living in the West, I had forgotten that I am a superstar.

At last we step outside into the "vastness of our wonderful homeland." The snow is whirling about, a real blizzard. "Before yesterday, we had lovely European weather," someone says. But in honor of my arrival, apparently, Russia has decided to provide something more typical of her. For a moment, amid the bustle, it is just she and I. "Hello," I say to her. "Alone at last. Thank you for the lovely snowstorm."

I had been almost a decade in exile, and I was beginning to realize that for me, in my exile, Russia had been transformed into literature about Russia—which should not be confused with Russian literature. The latter had also changed for me; it had taken on weight, "significance," had begun to be transformed into "texts." Ten years ago, when I was just another free-lance fiction writer hawking my wares from magazine to magazine, I didn't worry about "significance" or "texts." What had happened to me while I was away from Russia was this: my country—the vital land "where I loved and suffered," the "unwashed Russia," the "wife-motherland" (in the phrase of the poet Aleksander Blok), the "bitch-motherland" (as the novelist Andrei Sinyavsky called it)—had been transformed for me into merely a source of information. (A substantial source, to be sure.) "Wait a minute," I said to myself, "Am I a Russian? Or just an old Russia hand?" I wondered whether I would be able to revive my feeling of vital connection to this country; and I understood that the underlying purpose of my ten-day trip was to find the answer to that question.

The next morning I wake up in the U.S. Embassy's luxurious Spaso House (built not long before the Revolution as a private residence for a millionaire patron of the arts), breakfast with the hospitable Matlocks, and set out with my wife into the city. The Garden Ring, the broad road that circles central Moscow, has hardly changed. Empty trucks still rattle along on both sides of the street. But the air—alas!—is now worse than Los Angeles's. The billboards bearing political slogans have disappeared. Next to the Soviet Army's Political Academy, a poster for a small video club advertises films starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, an idol of Soviet youth.

We had heard plenty of stories about Moscow from émigré friends who had returned here before us. The general impression they conveyed was one of grayness, decay, decline, gloom. The odd thing was that the people who reported this would return from Moscow in an exhilarated state.

Moscow, of course, has never been known for its cheery atmosphere, although there was a time when we made a real carnival out of it. Now it did indeed seem gloomier. The buildings weren't exactly shimmering with newness. No architectural masterpieces had gone up on the Garden Ring; it looked as if nothing new had been built at all. For some reason, the doorways drew our attention. Once imposing, they were worn and peeling, with ugly, ill-fitting, utilitarian doorknobs that would have looked normal on a warehouse. Had there been a dramatic deterioration in the state of Moscow doorways? Or was I only now noticing their sad state because I had come back through the luxurious doorways of the West?

We come across several food stores and one shoe store that had been there before. I remember them well. The variety of their merchandise had already begun to decline by the late 1960s, though in the late 1970s, in the dairy store on the corner of the Garden Ring and Kalinin Prospekt, one could still find several types of butter, cheese, and yogurt. Now only a small fraction of this range remains. "What do you want?" a saleslady demands, sitting idly behind one of the empty counters. "Oh, nothing. . . . We're just looking," we

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stutter. "Then why did you come in?" she asks. "Do you think this is a museum?" We hurry out of the store, ashamed. "You see," I say to my wife, "she knows we're outsiders. She knows we're just observing." Then we go into the fruit and vegetable store. It isn't quite so empty, but the bananas are green, the grapefruits tiny and shriveled. The candy stores are especially depressing. When we lived here there was always a generous spread of candies, cookies, sweetcakes, and chocolates. Now there languishes on the empty shelves only a single type of cheap fruit drops.

Shoes are an issue worth noting. Seeing Soviet shoes always reminds me of my Hungarian medical school classmate, Sigmund Toth. In the spring of 1956 we were walking along Nevsky Prospekt in Leningrad, when suddenly Toth stopped in front of a shoe store window. "You know," he said, "if they put shoes like that out in the stores in Budapest, we'd have a revolution." Evidently such shoes went on sale that fall.

The shoe remains a useful index of political conditions. Despite my determination to notice the good things in Moscow, I am forced to conclude that Soviet shoe production has not improved. In fact it has deteriorated: now there's very little leather and lots more horrible Soviet vinyl. There's not another country in the world, not in Africa or Asia, that would produce such shoes. It makes no sense to do so: people don't buy them. Yet millions of Moscow feet are handsomely shod. Where these good shoes come from, since they're not sold in the stores, is one of Moscow's little secrets.

In all the bleakness of the remains of Soviet civilization, I do not notice, despite the tales of my émigré friends, despondency and depression. The faces have become markedly brighter. As a general rule, the degree of infamy of the apparatus of a regime is reflected in the gloominess of the faces of the population, especially in an ideological country where the ruling apparatus is a mass of millions. At the risk of taking things at their face value, so to speak, it seems to me I see less totalitarianism reflected in the faces of Muscovites.

Indeed, the city is bursting with energy and vitality. But it isn't clear what kind of energy it is. People walk at a quick pace: hurrying, charging ahead, pouring forth. You end up running around the huge megalopolis against your will, trying to keep up with the guerrilla strategies of the black marketeers. On the Arbat, some Romanians are peddling winter boots at a furious pace. One person runs up, grabs a pair, and marches off happily. Another shouts, "I've been taken! These boots are two different colors!" Every day in Moscow means going out to hunt for something, for anything, and then waiting for hours in maddening lines, endless lines, lines where the grapes of wrath ripen. They ripen slowly, in the Russian style, but they do ripen.

Pushkin Square is full of soapbox speakers and newspaper hawkers from various political sects. It's worth the trip just to see it. Right there in the center of Moscow, people are discussing all kinds of problems out loud, and not a policeman in sight. A load of blather, a couple of lousy arguments, the familiar sarcastic laugh of the Moscow street philosopher who before dared talk so openly only about soccer but now talks about the corruption of the ruling circles ("Those mafia bastards! They'll never give up a thing!"), and about corrupt commercial ties with the West ("They come here for our broads and our mafia goes there for their computers!"), and again about corruption. Always about corruption.

There are plenty of *tiotkas* in Pushkin Square, with Yeltsin buttons pinned to their coats. There are Georgians and Armenians telling horror stories about the Caucasus. Muscovite supporters of democracy in the Baltic republics are distributing a newspaper. A young boy goes by peddling the newspaper of the revived prerevolutionary Cadets, and a young girl brandishes an anarchist sheet. A group of punkers stands near the traffic underpass, as ridiculous as their peers in London. To an old-fashioned Soviet like me, it all looks like some ancient Stalin-era B-movie about bourgeois cacophony.

These political activities (except for those of the neo-Nazis and the Pamyat extremists) do not alarm Muscovites. People don't even talk about them much; and if they do, it's with a certain pride: finally, little by little, we're rocking the boat. There's much more talk about crime, organized and unorganized, and about the filtering of arms from the army to the masses. The evening news shows anti-tank grenades that were discovered in the trunk of a car. This on TV, where before you could see only pictures of the glorious collective farm workers' achievements and the Red Banner awards won by enterprises and regions. Our taxi driver shows us the burned hulk of a large restaurant. "Three days ago," he says enthusiastically, "some guys drove by on motorcycles and tossed Molotov cocktails at the place! And see that twenty-four-hour food store? Yesterday they evacuated everyone because of a bomb threat. Moscow," he concludes with gusto, "is under the thumb of the racketeers!" People recount crimes with a certain pride: in this we're the same as anywhere else, we've caught up with the West. In Kazan, my hometown, which has become notorious for its gangs of young thugs, they say: "It's just like Los Angeles here"—though that, alas, is where the similarity ends.

The magazine *Youth*, where our meanderings were finally leading us, was founded in 1955 by Valentin Kataev. Kataev, though a conformist, was always a marvelous writer. It is fair to say that the literary life of my generation began in this magazine. Now *Youth*, with a press run of three-and-a-half million, was about to serialize my novel *The Island of Crimea*, twelve years after I wrote it and nearly thirty years after my debut. Less than ten years ago, under Brezhnev, you could get a prison sentence merely for reading that book; two years ago its author was condemned in the Soviet press—supposedly from the mouths of "workers," in the traditional manner—as a traitor to the motherland and an agent of imperialism; and less than a year ago it was still on the list of books that absolutely could

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not be brought into the country. Now we open the door to the magazine's office (it has the usual crummy doorknob). "Come on, Vasya!" someone shouts. "Don't you know we're on deadline? Hurry up and go over your galleys!" Magazine offices are always the same.

A day later I speak on "The Russian Writer in America" at Spaso House. Diplomatically, Matlock has sent out invitations to both "Westernizers" and "Russophiles." About 250 people come, among them many tribunes of perestroika, the leaders of the liberals. Not one of the "Russophiles" shows up. One of them, the novelist Vassily Belov, had already publicly dissociated himself from the "Spaso House Event" and reproached the American ambassador. Instead of inviting a pathetic foul-mouthed émigré scribbler to stay with him, Belov had made clear, the representative of a great power should have invited a truly Russian writer with an unblemished reputation. Someone like himself, perhaps. But one suspects that a recipient of the State Award for Literature, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, and a member of the Vologda Regional Communist Party Committee and the Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. Writers Union might be able to find a place to sleep without the help of the American ambassador.

Belov issued his public condemnation of me at a meeting of like-minded representatives of the "village prose" school, writers of peasant tales who claim to be the authentic voice of the authentic Russia. At this meeting, speakers call for the expulsion of Jews from Russian culture, and identify the half-Jews among us. They go further: Who has wives, they ask, that are Jewish or half-Jewish? Those, it appears, are the most dangerous. Even a Moscow accustomed to anti-Semitic statements is taken aback by this particular gathering. Is this what our Russian writers are like?

If I were asked what I consider the most loathsome aspect of contemporary Soviet life, I'd reply without hesitation: the Nazism and the anti-Semitism of these writers. Even one Vasiliev, the leader of Pamyat, looks respectable next to these frenzied "village prose" writers. Unlike Vasiliev, the writer-Nazis are nearly all members of the Communist Party. In the worst years of the Brezhnev "era of stagnation" they were treated exceptionally well. When dissidents were arrested and undesired people shoved out of the country against their will, the "village prose" writers won government prizes and sat on presidiums. They unhesitatingly toed the Party line, occasionally diverging slightly, and mischievously, on the subject of Jews—sometimes saying out loud what the Party only meant. Now, when Jewish heads are counted at writers' meetings, euphemisms are no longer needed: squeeze 'em, crush 'em, we're in charge here! Now it's the word "Jew" that is becoming a euphemism, denoting everyone they hate: liberals, Westernizers, modernists.

Meanwhile Vasiliev sits beneath a portrait of the last czar and reflects upon the future of Russia. He is a spokesman for monarchism. He doesn't like the Western pattern of development. Russia has its own destiny; it is God's elect. "You are in favor of what? A limited monarchy?" the host of "Look" asks him. "Why limited?" he staunchly responds. "We are for an absolute monarchy." And he continues: "We have no ill feelings toward the Jewish people. We'll let them go and wave goodbye. You don't scare us with the word Nazism. People are always saying, 'Nazism, Nazism,' but for some reason they forget about the second component of that concept—socialism, national socialism."

The Great Hall of the Architecture Club. The site of my last public reading before I left ten years ago. The room seems not to have changed at all. I see the same lovely faces of my readers. The only difference is that there are more young people. They greet me as *their* writer. Despite myself, I get a little teary. I'm having a hard time maintaining my image as an unsentimental man on a sentimental journey. The past doesn't present itself as a peaceful series of idyllic pictures; it boils up, it whirls about, it bursts through stones, it breaks open flood gates.

In the Oleg Tabakov Theater a young troupe performs *Surplus Barrelware*, adapted from a tale I wrote in 1968. The actors were between three and seven years old when the tale was first published, to public raves and Party fury. On stage a huge sack symbolizes the barrelware; all the action takes place on its saggy burlap surface. When the author, now a fifty-seven-year-old professor at George Mason University, is applauded onto the stage, he is overcome with euphoria. He dives onto the sack in subconscious imitation of a Washington Redskins play. The actors pick the professor up and toss him into the air, again and again. Where am I? I'm flying, I'm flying!

In the Sovremenik Theater a play based on my mother Evgenia Ginzburg's book *Journey into the Whirlwind* opened last spring. It's still playing to sold-out houses. Forty actresses play women prisoners in the NKVD's political prisons in 1937. Twelve men play the investigators and transit guards. Marina Neelova, who looks much as my mother did in her youth, cries out during the interrogation, "Where are my children?!" Throughout the play an elderly lady—she was my mother's actual cellmate—wanders among the professional actresses. She's in almost every scene, though she doesn't say a word. My own son, a twenty-nine-year-old artist, sits next to me. The audience knows I'm in the theater. When Galina Volchek, the artistic director, calls me up onto the stage, I can think of no better gesture than a V-for-Victory. It is a victory for those who, in the 1960s, secretly distributed my mother's book, retyping it in thousands of copies on onion-skin paper. It is a victory for my mother, whose grave in Moscow is always adorned with flowers. This journey is becoming a little more than sentimental.

The provincial city of Kazan. It lies on the left bank of the Volga River. It's only about 500 kilometers east of Moscow, but for me it has become the remotest place in the world. I go there to see my aged father, but also to see the sources of my own life,

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the orphaned childhood of a scion of "enemies of the people," the squalor of my past. All this was as distant to me now as America was to me in my 1950s adolescence.

My father, Pavel Vasilevich Aksyonov, was chairman of the City Soviet here until 1937. He then spent eighteen years in Stalin's camps. When he returned, he received from Khrushchev an apartment, a pension, and an Order of Lenin. Today, at ninety-one, he is one of the oldest members of the Bolshevik Party.

Before I left the country, my father, then in his early eighties, was very active. He read newspapers, listened to foreign radio, argued forcefully during political discussions. Now his hearing and his vision have deteriorated. "I am very old," he says. "Forgive me, my memory sometimes fails me." It touches me that now he evaluates the leaders of the Soviet Union not through "class analysis" but through universal human values. "Lenin was a good man. Stalin was very bad. Brezhnev was good for nothing. Gorbachev—he's OK." The American down overcoat we brought thrills him. "How old are you now, my son?" he asks me. "As usual, father," I answer. He smiles. "Me, I'm a bit older than usual."

In Kazan, as in Moscow, journalists stick to me like glue. Two groups of reporters have come with us from Moscow. A third group, from Kazan, boards the train at a whistle-stop an hour before we get there. The cameras start rolling the minute we hit the Kazan station platform, and they don't let up till we leave.

Even in the 1920s, that is, in the mildest period of Soviet power during the New Economic Policy, the press couldn't print a tenth of what it prints now. The liberation of the media is far and away the most striking and wonderful sign of change. Of course, you still notice some old-style evasions and euphemisms. And Soviet journalists still write too often in the same old clichés, only now they deploy their leaden prose to criticize the status quo rather than to glorify it. Of course, the press is still supervised, but now the supervisors rebuke reporters whose stories read as if someone were supervising them. Soviet radio reports on the clash between students and militia in Prague with sympathy for the students. I encounter almost nothing of the old ways. I give many interviews, and almost all are published without distortion. On a television program about the Soviet armed forces, where drums once rolled and "The Invincible and Legendary," the official army hymn, once thundered, a group of officers discusses military matters. "The army is a part of society, isn't it?" one says. Another continues, "Our society is ill, and so the army is ill, too."

The TV people in Kazan take me to the local KGB headquarters, a building known as the Black Lake. For seventy years it signified terror to the population. The cameras begin to roll. Suddenly a militiaman approaches. "What are you filming here?" The old question. "It's none of your business," the crew members reply. The new answer. I stroll the length of the Black Lake, describing how my parents disappeared here in 1937, how I myself as a four-year-old met my father here. "Look more tragic!" the TV people shout at me.

This large provincial city, full of history and nearly devoid of gastronomy, shows no sign of apathy and inertia, despite its impoverished state. Its notorious "youth gangs," groups of young men in sweatpants and aviator jackets, are busy with their own affairs and don't bother the peacefully strolling crowds. The only line we see in the center of the city is for books: Jules Verne is for sale. There's no point lining up for anything else; the clothing in the stores is wretched, and for a long time food has only been available for ration coupons. But the words of Verne are just as good as the day he wrote them—and available without coupons. The local theater is rehearsing *Journey into the Whirlwind*. The people I studied with are now teaching in the same institutes where we were students. The Peter-Paul Cathedral, a planetarium ever since the Soviets took power, has been returned to the believers. The Tatar intelligentsia celebrates the millennium of Islam. The colonnades of the university, from which the young Lenin was once expelled, still gleam magically in the evening dusk. Through the architectural chaos you can still make out the roof of the high school where the great poet Velimir Khlebnikov once studied.

Two days later, still accompanied by our friends from television, we begin our return trip West from Kazan, destination Georgetown. An energetic middle-aged man comes into our car in the train. Briefcase in hand, he looks like the tough boss in a Socialist Realist film. "Everything's OK, fellows!" He winks. "I've got everything!" And what, exactly, is everything? He opens the briefcase: three bottles of cognac and a roasted chicken. Now, this is a matter for nostalgia: friendly company in a Soviet train car. Our new friend, it turns out, really is a big boss. He'd gone from Moscow to Kazan to deliver a red banner to a factory that won a competition. "Imagine," he winks again, "there I am, standing on stage like an idiot with this banner. Ah, Vasya Aksyonov, Vasya Aksyonov, we knew your stuff by heart at the Moscow Power Engineering Institute." And a few moments later, "You don't remember me?" He shifts his shoulders in a boxer's stance. "Moscow middleweight champion!"

"Tell us, Grisha," we ask him, "has communism got any kind of chance left?"

"Not a one," he answers firmly. "Let's have a drink!"

Ten years ago communism still seemed unshakable to us, and meanwhile its time was already drawing to a close. We liked to tell each other that Brezhnevism was the dinosaur's last phase before extinction. But we didn't believe it. Now the dinosaur is collapsing in front of us. Strangely, I feel neither triumph nor gloating. I merely wish to know this: Is there, behind all the tragicomic turns of our Russian tale—all the revolutions, counterrevolutions, Stalinisms, neo-Stalinisms, revisionisms, thaws, freezes, perestroikas, glasnosts—is there, behind all this, some enchanted playwright, some divine author who knows how the story ends?

—Translated by Moira Ratchford and Josephine Woll

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Just for the Fun of It

Last week, a note on films that start with heavy realism and then dissolve into fantasy. This week an equally familiar type—the film that starts as fantasy and never wavers. The latter is usually preferable. We're expected to believe *Bad Influence* and can't, but no one is expected to believe **Pretty Woman** (Touchstone). We're just supposed to enjoy it.

In this case that's not hard because the makers have taken care of Problem No. 1. The lifelike fairy tale can't really work, no matter how clever the plot, no matter how ravenous our hunger for myth, unless we enjoy being in the company of the principal actors. The makers of *Pretty Woman* got Richard Gere and Julia Roberts for the leading roles, and the director, Garry Marshall, has helped them to work their wiles on us through the script by J. F. Lawton (and uncredited others).

The myth this time is Pygmalion. In this instance Pygmalion is a vastly rich corporate raider in his forties, a New Yorker visiting Los Angeles for a week to do a deal. Galatea is a Hollywood Boulevard hooker. No juncture in the story—no setting or changing of course—makes any sense. Yet almost every moment with the two principals is pleasant, sometimes funny, occasionally even moving. In misty analogy, this screenplay is something like the libretto of an opera (an art the raider loves) that is hard to credit but that provides plentiful chances for arias and duets.

Credibility? Forget it. Who could believe that this man doesn't know much about driving a car? That, when he stops for directions, he would ask a hooker? That he would invite her into the car and would soon invite her to drive? We collaborate subliminally because we know that these two have to meet somehow if there's to be a romance about people from two different worlds, and we know that what starts as a business arrangement for a night will soon cease to be commercial and will continue.

In the course of his week in LA he perceives her true beauty and dresses her accordingly; she converts him from a takeover brigand into a creative person. Toward the end of the week she finds herself in love with him. This is after he has spent, by my estimate, a minimum of $100,000 on her, including a charter flight to San Francisco to attend the opera. (And what's playing that night? *La Traviata*, naturally.) The ending of the story, since it has nothing to do with likelihood, fits what has gone before.

Roberts, who was the doomed diabetic in the otherwise unbearable *Steel Magnolias*, plays the hooker with the infectious conviction that she is a star in the making. She is tall and lovely and behaves as she should—like a queen coming into her realm. She plunges into the hooker aspects of the character at the start as if she knows we know that change is on the way because this is a Movieland special and that she must show us the Before of Before and After. Later, she makes her first entrance in the smart clothes that Gere has bought for her as if she understands that we've been waiting for this thrill.

The script doesn't always help her. It tugs at her character for the sake of laughs. Even in this dream world, it's hard to accept that a woman as innately bright as she is shown to be, who plays chess and takes up Shakespeare, wouldn't know that her hooker outfit looks outlandish when she goes shopping on Rodeo Drive, wouldn't know that some terms would be out of place in chat at the opera.

But Roberts has wit and warmth, and she suggests that a new Rosalind Russell or Kay Kendall may be on the way. She makes us long for the old big-studio days when a concerned management would groom her as a long-term investment. In the present jobbing Hollywood world, Roberts will work for different employers every time out and will need especially good luck to keep her career on line.

Gere has proved himself a survivor in that jobbing world. He has made some bad choices (*King David*, *Miles from Home*), and since we tend to see an actor with his latest work in the foreground, from time to time his career has seemed to be declining. But he fights his way back with such films as *Breathless* (American style), *American Gigolo*, and the recent *Internal Affairs*, and through his vicissitudes has at least shown some range. (I first saw him off-Broadway in a Sam Shepard one-act play, *Killer's Head*, a monologue delivered by a convict strapped in an electric chair just before his execution.) Gere is an actor who has become a star; Roberts is a star who is becoming an actress.

None of this is to overrate the film.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cinema Paradiso. *Like a huge slice of good lasagna. Memories of a filmgoing life in a Sicilian town. Dig in. (Reviewed 2/19/90)* **Flashback.** *A sixties hippie today and a straight FBI agent. The plot bends but doesn't break; the fun and rue are fairly constant. (2/19/90)* **Glory.** *A black regiment with a white colonel in the Union Army. Genuinely stirring notes are sounded in an exceptionally good work. (1/8&15/90)* **Lonely Woman Seeks Life Companion.** *Perceptive directing and acting in this not-quite-comedy, from the Soviet Union, about a lonely woman in her forties and the man who answers her ad. (3/19/90)* **—SK**

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Pretty Woman wants only to engage us for two hours, and it does.

Nuns on the Run (Handmade Films) is a farce and is just as dismal as its title. Two London mobsters hijack a lot of money from some other mobsters and, for their lives, flee into a girls' college run by nuns, where they put on habits. This leads to seemingly interminable comic complications. Eric Idle (of Monty Python) and Robbie Coltrane (seen briefly as Falstaff in *Henry V*) strive manfully—probably the wrong word for sororal masquerade—but they can't prevail over the screenplay and direction, both of which were done by Jonathan Lynn. Pedro Almodóvar's *Dark Habits*, about an intruder in a convent, got some sharp and dirty fun out of his premise, but then Almodóvar had purpose and talent. Lynn is a mechanic.

A reader objects because, in my review of *Blue Steel*, I omitted to mention the psychological motives that impelled the Jamie Lee Curtis character to become a cop (Curtis's mother is a battered wife); that becoming a policewoman allowed Curtis to strike back at male authority with male means.

It seemed to me that the family background was something of an afterthought, laid on with a tiny trowel. It reminded me of an incident in the 1930s. A well-known New York author of radical bent took a Hollywood writing job, and when the picture came out, we all flocked to it to see what blows he had struck for the cause. The film turned out to be an absolutely stock college-football romance, except that in a crowd scene outside the stadium where mounted police were trying to keep order, there was one shot of a girl looking up at the mounted cops and shouting, "Cossacks!"

The family-background stuff in *Blue Steel* is more extensive, but it has the same patched-in effect as "Cossacks!" •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Two Fairy Tales

Craig Lucas has the power to make us see things his way, which is the mark of an artist. He peers at the world through thick ground lenses, exposing warts and blemishes undetected by the naked eye. He shares this magnified vision with the filmmaker David Lynch. Indeed, Lucas's best work, *Reckless*, was a kind of homage to Lynch's disturbing film *Blue Velvet*. Both were stories of twisted sex, gratuitous violence, unexpected revelations. Both focused on the malignant, crawling things that lurk behind the smiling surface of billboard America. And both seemed wholly original, yet almost wholly persuasive in their documentation of the dark underside of life.

Blue Velvet tended to lose its hypnotic hold on us whenever Lynch felt compelled to define its mysteries. The snakelike hose that moved in torment through the undergrowth was a more shocking image before it was analogized into the stroke being suffered by the hero's father, just as the severed ear discovered in the bushes was hauntingly suggestive so long as we didn't know its origin. I found *Reckless* somewhat more consistent in sustaining its atmosphere of disorientation. The play isolated us in a kindless, airless, gravity-less world, tangential with our own, yet possessed of its own special properties. If Lucas had offered to explain why the heroine's husband had taken out a contract on her life, or why every town she visited was called Springfield and every day was Christmas, he would have sacrificed poetry for clarity. The alchemy of the unconscious, of hallucination or dream, is to turn images and characters from waking reality into elusive, chimerical forms. Explanation and analysis are the reductive tools of the rational scientific mind, not of the visionary imagination. They belong to the tradition of social-psychological realism.

Lucas's new play, **Prelude to a Kiss**, is hardly *Death of a Salesman*. Still, it fails when it explicates a poetic premise into a prosaic fable. Highly entertaining and also deeply disappointing, the play will advance the playwright's reputation through a regression in his art. Lucas has lost little of his abrupt, declarative intensity. What he has lost (I hope temporarily) is his talent for what Keats called "negative capability"—the capacity to remain in doubt and ambiguity, the courage to surrender one's need for absolute certainty.

Before posing its tantalizing hypothesis, *Prelude to a Kiss* begins with a conventional courtship, as romantic as the title-inspired song that Ella Fitzgerald is singing when the lights come up. Two young people meet at a party and fall in love. Rita is a part-time bartender in a chic club who claims she hasn't slept an hour since she was fourteen, a socialist who doesn't want to bring babies into an evil world. Peter, a literate young man who works in a scientific publishing firm, spends a lot of time in Europe. After discussing their histories, literary tastes, and sexual preferences, they agree to marry. And when her dentist-father and housewife-mother give their approval, the suburban wedding takes place.

The wedding festivities, however, are interrupted by the appearance of a disreputable old man who insists on kissing the bride. The set goes gray; the old man staggers and kneels at the feet of Rita's father, saying, "Daddy, it's me." At this point the play becomes intriguingly Lucas-skewed. On honeymoon in the Caribbean, Peter begins to believe that Rita has changed. His socialist bride has bought a $1,500 gold bracelet and is indifferent to the social problems of Jamaica. She sleeps soundly every night. She claims she hasn't read Freud when they discussed his case histories before they were married. She is eager to bear a child. She doesn't know how to make his favorite drink. She seems vague about the history and makeup of her own family. In short, "a different Rita."

Nobody else seems to notice any difference, but Rita's presumed alteration, and her lack of patience with Peter's suspicions, cause marital problems. The couple quarrel, and Rita's father comes to remove her things from the apartment. Is Peter paranoid? Has Rita really changed—or is this a parable about the strangers who meet in marriage? "They're always changing," one character tells us. "That is life. Things are always shifting, growing." The first act closes in a shroud.

Alas, the second act unveils it. Peter's wife and the old man have exchanged souls through the kiss. Seeking Rita, Peter finds her trapped within a feeble male body, reflecting on old age, forgetfulness, and the death of friends and adding, "as a final reward for all this, you disappear." But Peter has married for better or for worse; he still adores his wife; and in a genuinely touching moment, he kisses the old man on his wrinkled lips. In the happy-ever-after conclusion, Rita recovers her soul from the usurper, who reverts to his normal self.

As a parable about the spiritual, Platonic nature of love, *Prelude to a Kiss* has charm and sweetness. But what promised at first to be a penetrating glimpse

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into the heart of darkness is thinned into a slight fable about the transmigration of souls. The play reminded me of *Ladyhawke*, a movie about two lovers separated by a curse—transformed into a falcon and a wolf, they assume human shape at different times of the day. It reminded me even more of Carlo Gozzi's *The King Stag*, where a king—his body usurped by a villainous minister—is forced to win back his wife in the shape of a sickly old man. (Like Peter, she finds that true love is more powerful than the lineaments of physical beauty.)

I don't wish to appear indifferent to the appeal of fable or fairy tale, but Lucas promises something deeper in *Prelude to a Kiss*. Although approving critics are mining it for autobiographical clues, the play is basically an escapist fantasy, which may be why Hollywood is already bidding for the property and beckoning the actors. Meticulously directed by Norman Rene in this Circle Rep production, the acting is very good: the romantic fervor of Alec Baldwin as Peter, the silken appeal of Mary-Louise Parker as Rita, the crusty humor of Barnard Hughes as the Old Man, and the satiric edge of Joyce Reehling in a variety of roles. I also like Loy Arcenas's setting—focused, like most of Lucas's plays, on a mysterious Magritte-like window, surrounded by crawling branches that augur a darker, more resonant experience than Lucas has managed this time to create.

Since Georg Büchner is the great-great-granddaddy of playwrights like Lucas, and **Woyzeck** is the ancestor of all postmodernist drama, it was interesting to see Richard Foreman's production of the play at the Hartford Stage Company in the same week. Büchner is one of the most curious figures in literature, writing modern plays a hundred years before his time—*Woyzeck* was unfinished at his death (at twenty-four!) in 1837, and not deciphered and published until 1879. The play is a series of fragments, with unnumbered scenes, few stage directions, and very vague locations. Yet it is an extraordinary work that has exercised an incalculable influence on neo-Romantic drama. Ferociously ironic, erratic, swampy, and strange, though composed just a few years after the heroic dramas of Goethe and Schiller, *Woyzeck* is completely unlike anything ever written before, even by Büchner. Its episodic structure, interspersed with songs, anticipates Expressionism, and its ecstatic, rhythmic, tender-coarse prose (images from daily life juxtaposed with high-flown metaphors) leads directly to Brecht.

The play is based on a historical case—a barber-soldier who murdered his wife in a fit of jealousy. Being the first public execution in Leipzig in over thirty years, it engendered considerable debate over whether Woyzeck was mad or sane. Büchner resolves the problem by avoiding it altogether. Woyzeck is almost certainly mad, but then so is the entire world. In this cold, implacable, brutal environment, society is merely another form of Nature, and man is the cruelest of the beasts.

Woyzeck himself is treated as an experimental object, and seems to be human only in his capacity to suffer. Examined by a doctor who could be a rough sketch for Mengele, Woyzeck is declared superior to other animals because he can control his urine, then urinates against the wall like a dog. Feeding him a diet of peas for three months, the doctor is absolutely delighted with Woyzeck's "beautiful *aberratio*," and offers him a raise for going mad. When Woyzeck discovers his wife betraying him with a drum major, he expects to see blisters on her lips. Voices in his head urge him to "stab the bitch to death." When he responds, he is apprehended by the police, who admire the aesthetics of the crime ("a good genuine beautiful murder"), while his orphaned child rides blithely on a hobby horse.

Woyzeck would seem to be the quintessential ontological-hysterical play,

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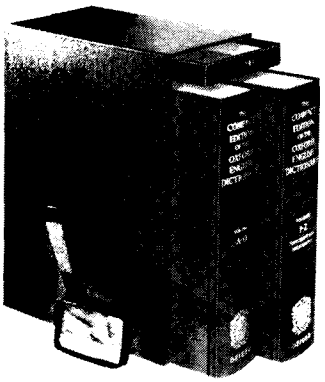

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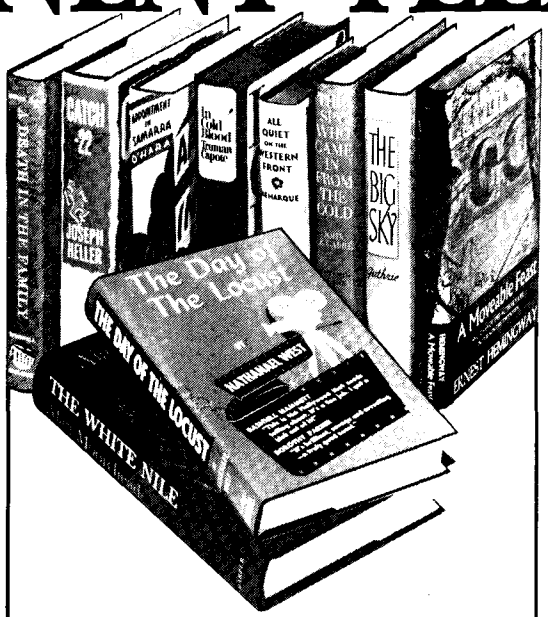

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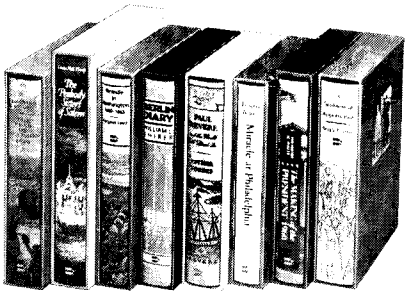

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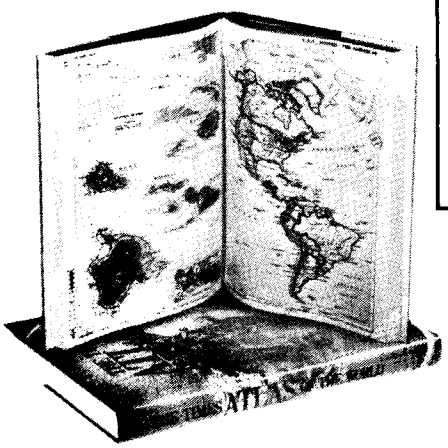

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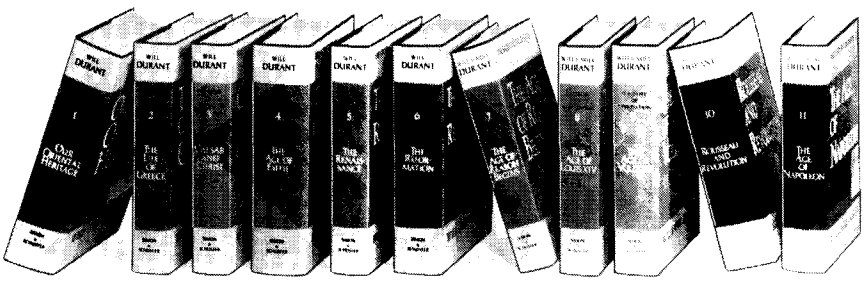

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then, and Richard Foreman would seem to be its ideal interpreter. The alienating techniques that are the signature of Foreman's theater—suspended strings, groaning sound collage, harsh, glaring lights, and suspended skulls and chandeliers—create an atmosphere of searing intensity, like a fevered dream. And the final image—Woyzeck unsuccessfully trying to sink the murder weapon in a series of shallow pools while washing the blood off his hands—is worth the price of admission.

Foreman's design sets the play in an abstract gunmetal-gray hell, constructed of platforms and ramps and a wooden boardwalk along which Woyzeck runs like a rat in a maze. The characters wear the makeup of the madmen in *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*—white pasty faces with dark hollow eyes and black lips—and perform in the spasmodic style appropriate to a menagerie of the damned. There are touches, too, of vampire films, *Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Mad Max*, and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*—the whole repertory of snuff culture that has given such appetizing new meaning to the concept of the pleasure principle.

David Patrick Kelly commits to the title part like he's sitting on a razor blade. A short, stunted man whose skin is drawn tautly over his skull, he brings to the role a pervasive sense of stoical misery that identifies Woyzeck as the archetypal proletarian ("We sweat even in our sleep, us poor people. . . . If we ever got to heaven, we'd have to help with the thunder"). He is abetted by a cast that conforms obediently to Foreman's vision of pain. The director's integrity and commitment never waver, and Hartford Stage should be commended for bravery in supporting a production so likely to repel its audience. But Foreman's *Woyzeck* is just a little too relentless, and thus, like *Prelude to a Kiss*, eventually turns into another kind of fairy story—this one told by a man who teethed on *Struwwelpeter*, with all its bloody moral lessons for the German young. •

The Obscure Artist of Desire

BY JED PERL

A Balthus Notebook by Guy Davenport

(Ecco Press, 128 pp., $17.95)

Balthus, who turned eighty-two in February, has lived through a period that turns all manner of artists into media stars and yet has managed to stay out of the public eye. He never grants interviews and is rarely photographed. In the 1960s, when the critic John Russell was preparing the catalog for a retrospective at the Tate Gallery, he wrote Balthus for some biographical information. The telegram he received in response has been quoted many times: "No biographical details. Begin: Balthus is a painter of whom nothing is known. Now let us look at the pictures. Regards, B."

Balthus shows his work perhaps once in ten years, and he is content to have many of his paintings disappear into private collections before they have been exhibited in public or even reproduced. He has never done limited-edition graphics, although the quick money to be made from such editions holds an almost irresistible appeal for contemporary artists. His aversion to publicity, his fondness for châteaus, his pursuit of aristocratic titles, his taste for subjects that many see as out of step with our sexual politics—all of this, taken together, has given him the reputation of a dandy, a reactionary, a snob.

Certainly Balthus has gone his own way and cultivated his own view of modern times. But I suspect that he has always known what more and more of us have been forced to see: that in the postwar art world, no sane or serious person dares to be an insider. Holding himself apart from the passing parade, Balthus has managed (is it a paradox?) to respond to the modern world with more originality than most of his au courant contemporaries. For fifty years he has been offering up his own views on city life and country life, on childhood and history, on sex, love, and romance.

From what we know of Balthus's life, we know it has been a very full one. As a boy, he was acquainted with Bonnard, Gide, and Rilke (who wrote an introduction to a book of drawings, *Mitsou*, that Balthus published when he was thirteen). In the thirties he made a sensational reputation for himself with sexually explicit paintings, was a friend of Artaud, and moved in the fashionable circle of the Vicomtesse de Noailles. Balthus had the distinction of having his work collected by Picasso—perhaps the only artist of his generation so honored; and, in the sixties, he became director of the French Academy in Rome, where he supervised a celebrated restoration of the academy's crumbling Villa Medici. This slow-working artist, who has over the years had two major museum shows in New York City and many more in Europe, strikes many of us as the greatest painter alive. He is also an immensely enigmatic artist.

Something of Balthus's marginal situation has attracted Guy Davenport, himself an artist who cultivates a studied out-of-itness. Davenport's *Balthus Notebook*, which slipped into bookstores a couple of months ago with a Balthusian lack of publicity, is a collection of sentences and paragraphs, arranged *pensées*-style, with a lot of white space around them. Davenport—who has written some marvelous stories about children and their erotic and intellectual awakenings ("Robot," "The Death of Picasso")—is quite naturally sympathetic to the Balthusian idea that an adult can moon over the glories of childhood without illicit intent.

In this book, which is an expanded version of an essay that Davenport originally published in 1980, he connects Balthus's children to the children in Baudelaire, Gide, Proust, Colette, Montherlant, and Cocteau. "Modern French writing," Davenport observes,

> has been interested in childhood and adolescence in a way that American and English writing have not. The French see an innocent but an experienced mind in the child. . . . The child in Alain-Fournier, Colette, Cocteau inhabits a realm imaginatively animated with a genius very like that of the artist. Children live in their minds.

A page earlier Davenport has commented that "Balthus's children have no past (childhood resorbs a memory that cannot yet be consulted) and no future (as a concern). They are outside time." Balthus without the melancholic kinkiness would not be the artist we adore; and like some of Balthus's admirers in France, Davenport probably labors too hard to deny the artist's voyeuristic dimension. Still, Davenport is right to reject the psychological second-guessing that seeks to treat every imaginative foray as a sign of pathology. Davenport suggests—I think he's right—that Balthus's imagination is nourished as much

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by historical precedent as by personal obsession.

It's refreshing to read an American who sees the world of Balthus from a Balthusian vantage point. Davenport makes some friendly bows to Lévi-Strauss and Barthes, but he persists in an older kind of French idea, namely that an artist retains power over his own fictional worlds. Davenport isn't censorious about these paintings that are carefully constructed to stand out of time. In fact, he gets a kick out of this brazenly elitist artist, who would apparently prefer that his meanings be clear only to those who occupy his own supersophisticated circle. "Balthus," Davenport writes, "has worked not with spiritual substrata where civilization and barbarity have common roots, but with the high surfaces of civilization (the ancient farm, the studio, well-furnished rooms, the streets of Paris). A commentary on any of the paintings will extend deep into history, biography, and rich iconographic detail."

A passion for the "high surfaces of civilization" is central to Balthus's poetic realism. This passion is also, perhaps even more than Balthus's provocative subject matter, what makes him such a controversial figure today. The people who run the art museums and the art magazines are positively paranoid about any artist who gets high on old-fashioned high culture; they believe that an artist is only as good as his zeitgeist readings, and Balthus, of course, has turned his back on the zeitgeist. Davenport understands that part of the delight we feel in Balthus's art is the delight of watching an artist tie into the history of art. To look for illumination in those "high surfaces"—what (marvelous) nerve. I think Balthus expects his audience to make the historical connections. In a beautiful discussion of *Nude with Cat and Mirror* (1977-80), Davenport observes:

> The girl is from Simone Martini, and the cat, exactly quoted, is from Hogarth's *The Graham Children*, an engaging painting in which a boy, entertaining his three sisters, thinks he is making a caged canary flutter by playing a music box, whereas the bird is fluttering because the family cat is staring at it and trying to mesmerize it. . . . Balthus's painting is about virginity and desire as all its iconography attests: bed, nudity, billet-doux, the brazier, the mirror, the transfixed cat.

Davenport is good at odd juxtapositions, at telling historical parallels. "Balthus, like Daumier," he remarks,

> allows caricature beside traditional academic rendering. So does nature. Velázquez's dwarves and midgets serve to place an infanta or kid in the chain of being as his society understood it. There is a profounder meaning to Balthus's ogres: they belong with the voluptuousness of his girls, for sex, when it comes, will be goblin as much as it will be Eros.

In a few sentences Davenport can open a vista, stereopticon style, through which we see far-flung works of art composing together in new ways.

Still, there's something overly writerly about Davenport's approach. When he compares Balthus to the English realist Stanley Spencer, I can't help but cringe: whatever the psychological power of a few of Spencer's nut-brown nudes and portraits, he's an artist who's incapable of making the surface of a painting open up and breath. The literary and iconographic interpretations of Balthus, no matter how marvelous, cannot illuminate the extent to which his genius rests in *pictorial* invention—the invention of forms and spaces and color relations—that give body to a literary imagination.

BALTHUS, *THE GOLDEN DAYS*, 1944-46
(COURTESY OF THE HIRSHHORN MUSEUM)

Especially in the work of the past thirty years (which is the least admired of his work), Balthus's pictorial imagination has overtaken the literature. In the great nudes of the 1970s and the 1980s, whatever might appear untoward in the artist's taste is dissolved in the exemplary and very strange harmonies of green and gray and gold. Sometimes it seems that Balthus's literary imagination is a response to his pictorial imagination: this is only true of the greatest artists. *The Artist and the Model* (1980-81), in which the figure of the artist turns his back on his model, can be seen as a literary commentary on the freedom that Balthus's nudes achieved in the seventies, when they took on a dreamy softness, as if they were no longer viewed through the sharp-focus eye of the artist-voyeur.

Ultimately, Balthus compels us because he is a painter who fulfills himself within the terms of his medium. Yet this is not always easy to see. Due to the generally tonal nature of his color and the gravelly surfaces of many of the paintings, it is essential to see them in natural light. While the color in a Matisse or a Bonnard or a Picasso tends to hold fairly well in artificial light (which is the light in most exhibition spaces), Balthus's paintings can make little sense in anything but the mixed ambient illumination of daylight. Balthus's impasto surfaces, like those of Braque, are distorted by artificial light, which tends to turn all texture into a generic chiaroscuro photograph of the surface of the moon. The powdery high-keyed color in Balthus's *Landscape with a Tree* (1958-60) looks mannered under artificial light (as it did at the Metropolitan Museum); under natural light (as it is sometimes seen at the Pompidou in Paris) it's a miraculous, lyrical painting. A full appreciation of Balthus can only be acquired over years of looking, since these rarely exhibited paintings are usually exhibited poorly.

When I first saw Balthus's Japanese figures, at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York in 1977, I was bemused by them. A painter who'd been looking at Balthus for decades said, "The new Balthuses are always hard to assimilate. It takes time." After nearly two decades of Balthus looking, I've concluded that the way into Balthus isn't through his iconography, it's through his sense of form. The dark, self-consciously crabbed exactitude of the pre-World War II work was a bold assertion—a romantic surrealist protest against modern times. It was also a protest that Balthus, as he developed, had to move beyond. The story of his fifty-year career is the story of how the anti-modernism of the early paintings was absorbed, over the years, into a full embrace of the modernist canon of anti-naturalistic color and flat, decorative design.

Some of the work that Balthus did after he left Paris around 1950 for a châ-

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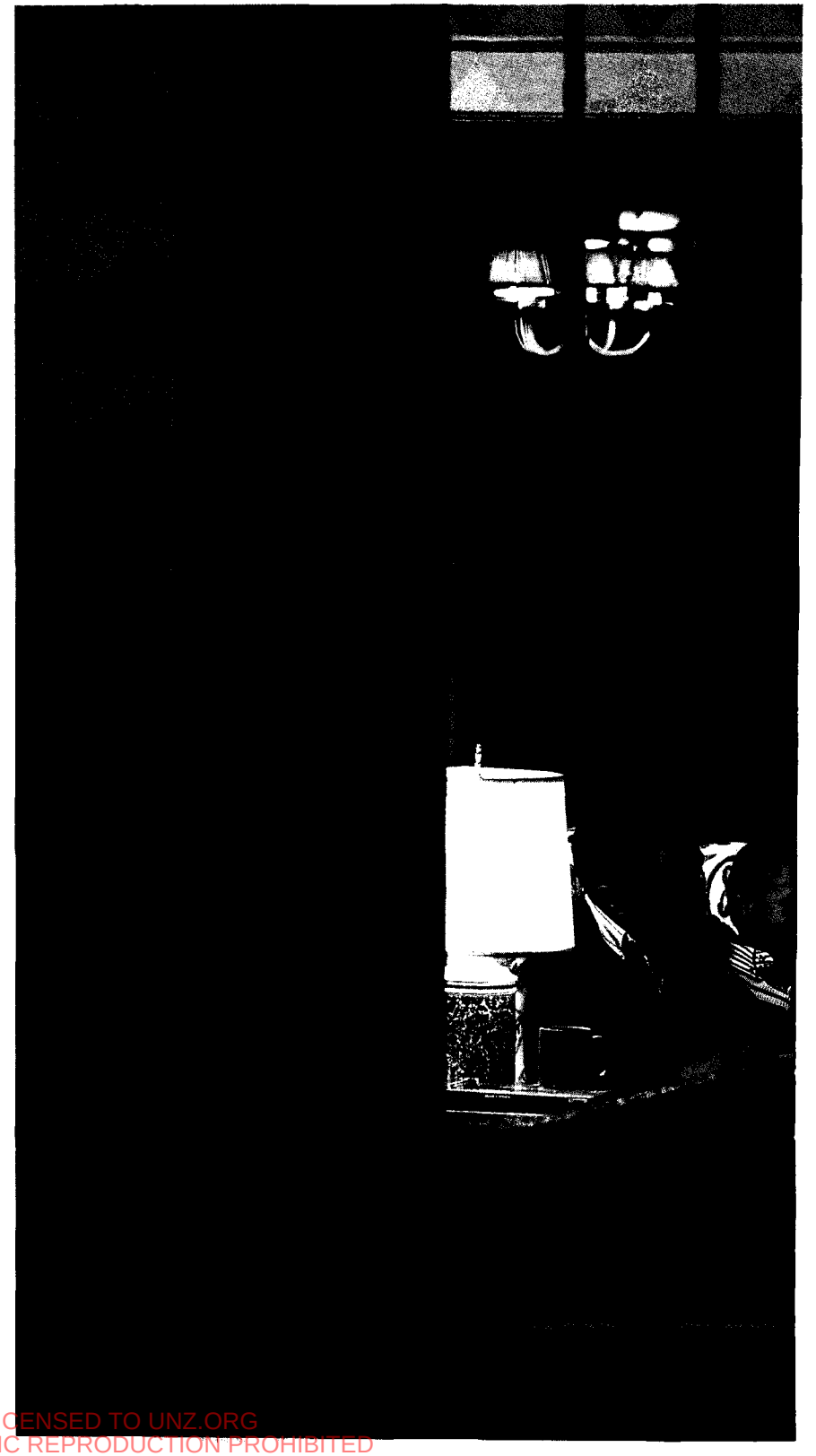

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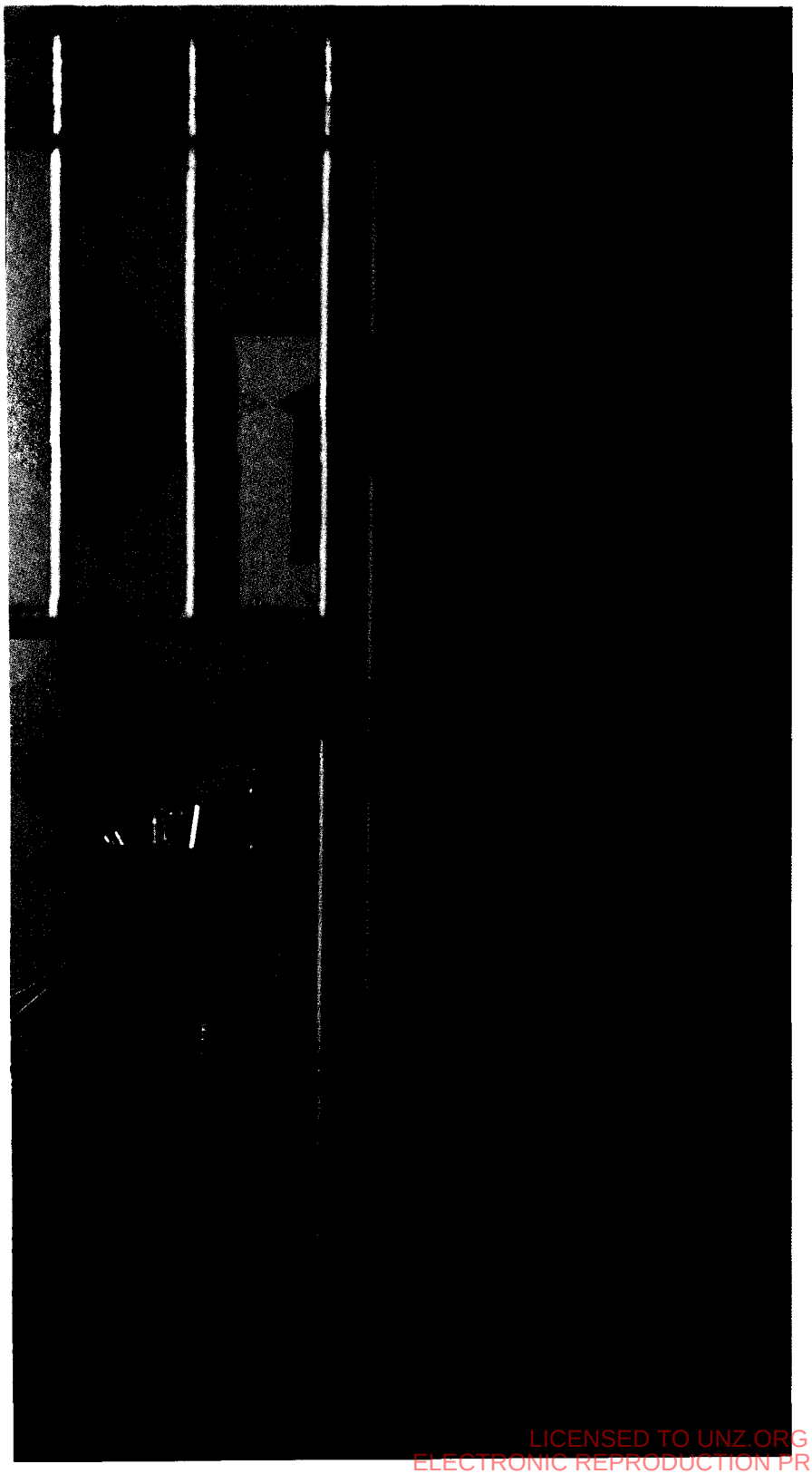

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teau in the Morvan region of France remains overly decorative, with its heavily weighted patterns in contrapuntal reds and greens and oranges and purples. And yet the unabashed decorativeness of these paintings came out of a pictorial necessity. Balthus, in his own good time, was falling deeper and deeper in love with Bonnard, the lost hero of his youth. What has been so marvelous, in the paintings that have come out of the studio since the sixties, is how Balthus has managed to enrich and to deepen his color while achieving a broader and easier sense of design. The series of paintings of nudes in beds, of which *The Nude with Cat and Mirror* is one of the masterpieces, unite the flat, decorative style that Balthus adapted from Bonnard and Braque with the quattrocento illusionism of his 1930s and 1940s paintings to achieve a poetic completeness unprecedented in his work. To compare the girl holding the mirror in *The Golden Days* (1944-46) with the girl holding the mirror in a painting of thirty years later is to witness a process of distillation. Some of these nudes of the early eighties bear comparison with Correggio and Titian, the greatest of them all.

But if the canvases that Balthus did in the early 1980s might have led one to believe that the man was achieving serenity, the one painting completed since then that I have seen (admittedly in reproduction) suggests otherwise. In a characteristically Balthusian twist, this painting first appeared not in an art magazine, but in a photograph of an interior in the magazine *HG*, where it was partly obscured by a potted flower and a large sculpture of a lion. (Apparently Balthus has a fondness for interior decoration magazines: this month *HG* includes a photographic portrait of Balthus and shots of his Italian mountain retreat.)

The painting is called *Nude with Raven* (1983-86) and is based on the Poe poem, or perhaps on Baudelaire's interest in Poe. It is a return to the melodramatic hysterics of the 1940s. Above, the raven, a dark shape, stares down from his perch. Below, a nude girl—elongated, almost mannerist in her proportions—reclines on a bed. Her right arm flies up into the air; her mouth opens in a sort of cry. This is one of the most bizarre of Balthus's visions. It's a romantic horror story: the ghostly figure is a sort of doppelgänger, the opposite of Balthus's honey-dipped nudes of recent years. This painting suggests a "darkest hour is just before the dawn" twist in the life of an artist who has for some years been sending us reports on what looked like a paradisiacal old age.

Back in the early seventies, when I first heard about Balthus, there were perhaps three Balthuses hanging in New York museums. There were no books on him in print. In a secondhand bookstore one could find a copy of the Museum of Modern Art catalog of 1956 (a show that went up simultaneously with the Pollock retrospective—as a painter once said to me, New York made its choice); one could collect what old catalogs the Pierre Matisse Gallery, which had represented Balthus since the thirties, had in stock; one could buy, at art bookstores, some of the European catalogs that dribbled in. As the seventies progressed, Balthus's work came out of the shadows. In 1977 Pierre Matisse had a show of the new paintings. The gallery was jam-packed. Then, in 1979, Rizzoli published a monograph by Jean Leymarie, the first book devoted to the artist. In the winter of 1983-84, the Metropolitan Museum mounted a great retrospective. Balthus did not attend the opening in New York, apparently out of consternation at the catalog, which offered much more biographical information than the artist felt was appropriate.

This refusal marked the beginning of a curious turn in Balthus's fortunes. There were a number of positive reviews of the Metropolitan show, but feeling ran very much against the artist and the paintings. America had been hankering for Balthus, yet seen in bulk his work seemed to produce a sort of reverse reaction. Some were offended by the subject matter, and many complained about what they called the overly decorative quality of the recent work—there were comparisons to greeting-card art, things like that. Balthus was reportedly offended by the reception, which is, some say, why he has chosen not to show in New York since then.

Why did the retrospective kick off a backlash? Leaving the show at the Met, many people came to the conclusion that the paintings did not fulfill the artist's high ambitions. But I tend to feel that Balthus's sunken reputation has more to do with the character than the quality of his art. It's impossible to judge or to experience Balthus's work in relation to any of the dominant trends of the day, and that is how most people insist on experiencing contemporary art. Before the retrospective, lacking hard evidence, people could invent their own Balthus. In one way or another, his work was seen as prefiguring postmodernism: this explains his inclusion, along with Picasso and Jean Hélion, in the "New Spirit in Painting" show at the Royal Academy in London in 1981. In the late seventies, Balthus was taken up by some critics and curators as a kindred spirit to the neo-expressionist figurative painters who were just then arriving on the scene. For others he was an avatar of a new tradition-conscious figure composition. Then came the Metropolitan retrospective. It demonstrated the extent to which Balthus is none of these things. He's too much of a classicist, too absorbed in an old-fashioned idea of pictorial completeness, to relate to the new expressionism. And he's too much of an eccentric, too absorbed in his own very idiosyncratic themes, to give support to any move toward a generalizing classicism. Balthusland, people began to feel, is no man's land.

Of course, Balthus has cultivated this sense of insularity. His work often represents windowless rooms, or landscapes that are boxed in by high horizon lines. He has also underlined his insularity by exhibiting so rarely. Yet for those who have followed his incredible journey, this very insularity is now tied into the heroism of his career. We've become used to artists who show every eighteen months and can't take up a new color combination without having it written about in the art magazines. We're in danger of forgetting that many of the greatest developments in modern art have gone on far from the public eye.

This is the case not only with artists like Van Gogh and Cézanne and Seurat, who could not have had access to a large public if they had wanted it. It is

Cloudy Issues

It seemed to me, one evening driving home,
The clouds enjoyed a wider range to roam.

Like gods they passed me loftily overhead,
Above respect for any highway bed,

While I drove safely by the rules, afraid
Of what might happen if I disobeyed.

Yet what was true of me was true in reverse,
Since they would any minute soon disperse:

Held in suspense between the cool and warm,
They too were under pressure to conform.

One of us drove by land, the other flowed;
I followed a hard, and they an airy road.

They had a rainy purpose to fulfill;
I was a puppet of my own free will.

And so, whatever difference there might be,
We both conformed and each of us was free.

Ben LaFarge

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also true of artists like Picasso and Matisse; even after their fame was assured, they often chose to exhibit at irregular intervals, and to keep whole bodies of work out of the public eye. No doubt the reasons why artists show or do not show are complex, and are often affected by external circumstances. One factor we often overlook is that artists may find strength in working alone. This need not reflect disdain for the wide world; indeed, it could be a form of respect, grounded in the sense that one must know oneself before one expects others to know one.

As we move into the 1990s, many gifted artists are unable to get the attention of a large public. This is painful and even devastating in an era that celebrates celebrity above all other things; but it may, in some cases, enable artists to follow a logic of their own. Right now, every essential vision is an eccentric vision. The postmodernists are right to argue that modernism is in disarray. Where they're wrong is in proposing a coherent response to modernism. I believe that every contemporary artist of consequence is a late modernist, a refugee (to borrow Kitaj's metaphor) who departs modernism carrying what precious baggage he or she can. Balthus, who grew up in the Paris of modernism, is one of the first—and the only survivor among the first—of the great refugees.

Guy Davenport's *Balthus Notebook*, an art book unlike other art books, fits an artist unlike other artists. This painter who chooses to operate at the margins is an inspiration and an example to those artists who have been forced to live at the margins. Balthus would not want to be a leader of others. But by expecting both everything and nothing of his public, he's shown us how to create at a time when art is at once widely disseminated and dissected and little appreciated and absorbed. Balthus—that snob, that dandy, that elitist—is a prime mover in our hidden avant-garde.

JED PERL is the author of *Paris Without End: On French Art Since World War I* (North Point Press).

Aron's Rod

BY ALAN WOLFE

Memoirs: Fifty Years of Political Reflection by Raymond Aron translated by George Holoch

(Holmes and Meier, 509 pp., $45)

For dramatic power, nothing rivals the making of the cold war so much as the unmaking of the cold war. Yet there will always be at least one difference between then and now—the difference, if you will, between "X" and "Z." Then there were men of great intellectual stature framing the perspectives that made sense out of rapidly changing events; now we have formula and cliché. Raymond Aron (1905-83) is not alive to put into historical and intellectual perspective the end of the period whose contours he shaped. But we do have, not a moment too soon, the English translation of his memoirs. Reading his recollections in the context of the emerging world order creates mixed feelings: joy that his pessimism has, at least to this point, been proved wrong; sadness that his clear voice is not among the many voices clamoring for our attention.

Almost alone among the intellectuals of his generation, Aron found his milieu among the power holders and the policy elites. He was as sympathetic toward the United States, and as hostile toward the Soviet Union, as most French intellectuals were the other way around. His books, including his most academic ones, were personal essays rather than the products of long hours in the library; and even when their subjects seemed remote, they were really exercised by events of the day. Rarely has so gifted an intellectual spent so much time so close to power. His memoirs broach the essential question of his life, which is the question of realpolitik: Do intellectuals understand the world better if they put themselves in the position of those making political decisions, or if they stand outside in judgment of them?

French academic careers follow a pattern as completely inscribed as any of Emile Durkheim's functionalist biological metaphors. The most brilliant university graduates, after demonstrating their mastery of philosophy and classics, go off to the provinces to teach, just as Durkheim first went to Bordeaux. They work for a decade or so on a magnum opus, on a comprehensive work that attempts a complete synthesis of a particular field. And, upon the death or retirement of one of the Sorbonne's leading lights, the already middle-aged scholar receives the call to Paris, ready to sponsor a new generation of students who begin the process all over again.

Raymond Aron competed with such luminaries as Jean-Paul Sartre and Paul Nizan to be the most brilliant young Frenchman of his generation. But after military service from 1928 to 1930, he did not go to the French provinces. He went to Germany instead, working as a teaching assistant in French at the University of Cologne. This was the decision that changed his life; Germany, as Rolf Dahrendorf once said, was Aron's fate. Aron was psychologically unequipped to follow a Durkheimian path. "Despite everything," he realized, "my reading of the great works on idealism and realism interested only my mind, not my heart." What he found in Germany was politics. Instead of the universalistic morality of Durkheim, it was the realpolitik of Weber that structured his thought. "Thanks to him," Aron writes of Weber, "my future course, glimpsed on the banks of the Rhine, took shape."

Weber and Durkheim have come to symbolize two different ways—Weber would have said, two ideal types—of reflecting on the nature of society. Society is an all-embracing force for Durkheim, instructing us on our obligations to others while collectively representing the universality that we all share. The Durkheimian is purposive and reformist, beginning with a model of how society ought to work and then attempting, through scholarship and intervention in the public debate, to ensure that it does. For Weber, by contrast, society is organized into different realms, each with its own particularistic ethic. Because the realm of politics deals with the management of violence, the ethical rules that guide politicians are necessarily different than they are in, say, the realm of religion. Politicians have a special ethic of responsibility that demands of them not that they ask what ought to correspond to some higher vision of human purpose, but that they show sober and unemotional clearheadedness.

Returning to France in 1933, Aron produced three important books in rapid succession: *German Sociology* (1935), *The Critical Philosophy of History* (1938), and *Introduction to the Philosophy of His-*

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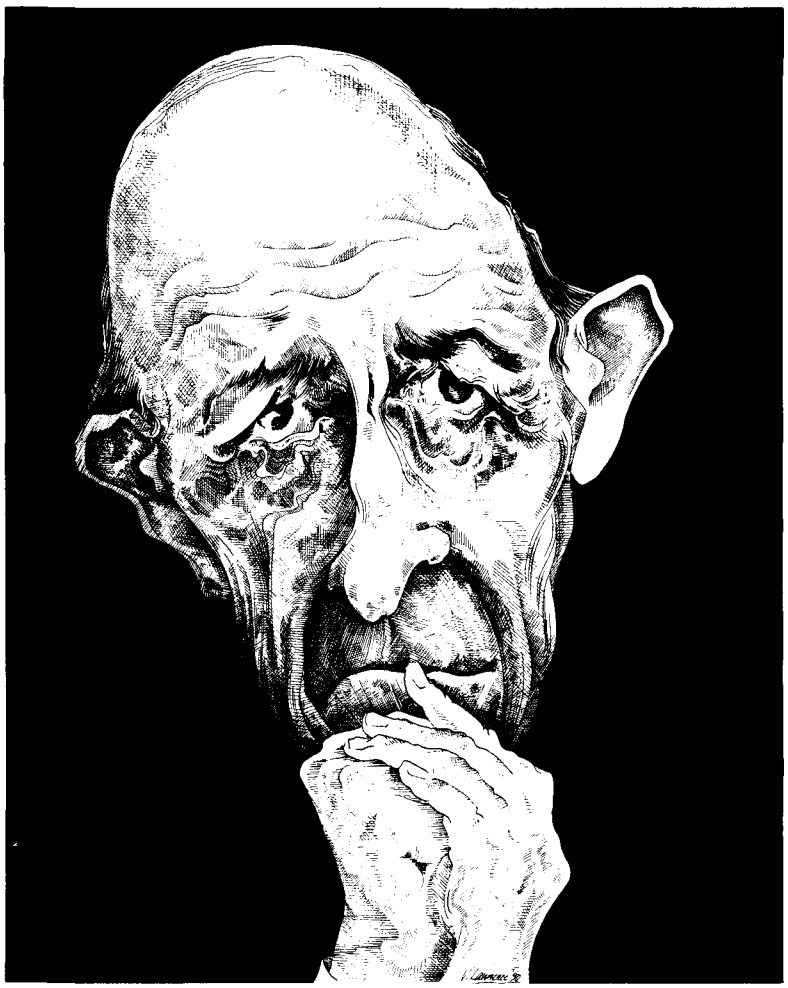
tory (1938). In these writings, and as a result of his confrontation with German thought, Aron was able to introduce a view of historical fate far more tragic than the ones to which French thinkers were accustomed. "History," Aron wrote, "horribly devours individuals in a manner that apparently cannot be avoided as long as violence is necessary for social change." But if history is tragic, it does not follow that its course is always predetermined. One of the major purposes of *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* was to argue that things—especially "big" events, like the Battle of Marathon—might have turned out otherwise. It is almost as if we can choose between our tragedies: the best is never possible, but we can, under the right conditions, avoid the worst.

What Aron found so attractive in Weber's thought was his emphasis on action, his way of understanding the conditions that make possible one fate rather than another. Individuals are not cogs in a structure, as they are in Marx (and more in Durkheim); choices are available, from Weber's perspective, but not to everyone. By trying, in Aron's words, "to present the world as it was," the sociologist comes to appreciate the narrow, but nonetheless real, degree of freedom available to elites at any historical moment. Weber's greatness, Aron wrote, lay in his being "a politician and a thinker at the same time." It did not take much foresight to realize that Aron was establishing for himself the same objective, although he, like Weber, would never directly serve a prince.

Aron's entire career was dedicated to the proposition that the social theorist, to understand the social world, must place on himself the limits that those who would influence history place on themselves. "I considered myself responsible at almost every moment, and I was always inclined to ask what I could do in the place of those in power." By assigning such importance to personal responsibility, Aron became in some way more of an existentialist than Sartre. The task of the sociologist, he argued in 1970 in his inaugural address to the College de France, is to study social reality "not to find in it foundations or justifications for moral or political imperatives but to help the individual become conscious of himself and of his environment."

It was not long before the first test of Aron's perspective presented itself. He left France for England in June 1940, becoming involved in *La France libre*, a resistance paper initiated by Charles de Gaulle. Each month, in a "Chronique de France," the political analyst appeared under the name René Avord. His articles were characterized by razor-sharp reasoning, the cold calculation of alternatives, the strict avoidance of sentimentalism. At a time when the distinction between journalism and propaganda had disappeared, Aron's columns came to be widely appreciated for their balance, and for their rootedness in the real world.



RAYMOND ARON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

At the same time, however, the dark side to realpolitik began to show itself in his thought. "We were not subject to censorship," he wrote, "although we practiced a kind of self-censorship." Unfortunately what *La France libre* left out was that World War II was not just another war. Caught up in the dilemmas of Vichy, Aron barely took cognizance of the anti-Semitism of the regime, and paid little attention to the fate of the European Jews. Aron rather hollowly absolves himself of blame: "I cannot criticize myself for not having foreseen the execution of a plan of genocide, and for having written nothing about it in La France libre." But surely the whole point of realism is to foresee what others cannot, to prepare for the worst, to recognize the absence of realism, and the presence of ideology in its deadliest form, in the enemy. Realpolitik could give only a lame account of an event like World War II—of a struggle between principles, of a reality based not on the contest of interests but on the contest of values.

Still, if Aron's perspective may have been inappropriate for fascism, it was quite relevant, at least in the period from 1946 to around 1960, to communism. The question facing those who supported the West in the period after World War II was whether they were primarily anti-Communist or anti-Soviet. The former is an ideological position rooted in the proposition that communism is evil and liberty is good. The latter is a realpolitik position based on geopolitical considerations of empire and expansion. Because Aron, who sometimes combined elements of both, gave more weight to anti-Sovietism than to anti-communism in the period after World War II, his realpolitik was more appropriate at a time when the boundaries between East and West were unsettled. For one extended moment, realpolitik and reality coincided in a way they did not during World War II (and would not again in the 1970s and 1980s). There were real issues at stake in the postwar division of Europe; as recent events from Prague and Leipzig demonstrate to all but the most cynical, sovereignty and the balance of power matter. It is, in short, not possible to imagine what the cold war was about without the shape given to it by thinkers of Aron's stature.

Happy in England, where he came into contact with the economists Lionel Robbins and Friedrich Hayek, Aron

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never considered remaining there after the war. "The decisive reason for my choice almost went without saying: I would never change my country. I would be French or I would have no country." Returning home, he rejected not only England, but a traditional academic career as well. "Infected by the virus of politics," he had discovered that it was reality, not approaches to reality, that stirred his soul. After a stint with Camus's *Combat*, he joined the staff of *Le Figaro* in 1947, surprising those who assumed that a man of his background would join the more left-leaning *Le Monde*.

What, then, were Aron's politics? It is a sign of the complexity of his thought that the question is still difficult to answer. He was, in a sense, born on the left: "A Jewish intellectual of good will who chooses the career of letters, estranged from his fellows who remain in textiles or banking, can hardly do anything but will himself, feel himself, to be on the left." Yet for Aron's generation, the issue that defined one's politics was one's attitude toward the Soviet Union. From the start to the finish of his career as a journalist and a scholar, Aron never wavered from strongly anti-Soviet views. Numerous French intellectuals after World War II either apologized for Stalinism—as Merleau-Ponty seemed to be doing in *Humanism and Terror*—or, as in the case of those associated with the *Rassemblement Democratique et Révolutionnaire*, they opted for a "third camp" position between capitalism and socialism. In this atmosphere, Aron's consistent anti-Sovietism was a conspicuous act of courage, although there were more than a few Russian and Eastern European intellectuals living in Paris and warning of the fate of their countries.

Aron's realpolitik raised two other issues that proved decisive. Anti-Sovietism on the scale he envisioned meant a strong Germany and close relations between America and France. And both positions were as uncomfortable for French intellectuals as a critical attitude toward Moscow. Aron recognized quite early that a strong Germany was the key to European stability. In *The Century of Total War* (1951) he wrote: "Western Europe knows from of old, or should know, that it is disastrous to have as enemies both Germany *and* Russia." The latter already an enemy, relentless logic demanded that the former be a friend. The partition of Germany, Aron argued, was already a victory for the Russians: "The elimination of Germany immediately opens the West to the Russian menace." The French, in short, would simply have to swallow their distaste for their neighbors to the East and work to strengthen them:

> A reconstituted Germany would tend, in accordance with old traditions, to oscillate between East and West, and to extract as much as possible from one side or the other in return for always uncertain cooperation. A precarious situation, it may be said. True, but how much better than that of today! The prospects of peace will be improved with the increase in the number of centers of force.

Anti-communism and realpolitik did not always work together, but in this case they consorted naturally with each other. Most French thinkers could not accept then—and cannot accept now, when a unified Germany is almost a reality—what Aron saw so clearly, that national pride has little to do with balances of power.

Even more difficult for French opinion to swallow was the need for Franco-American cooperation. Although the Vietnam years would seem to indicate otherwise, it is not only the French left that is anti-American and not only the French right that looks toward Washington. The French left, especially in its contemporary postmodernist phase, is fascinated to the point of obsession with the United States. And the French right has never accepted Tocqueville's efforts to convince his fellow nobles that they had better make an accommodation with the new Atlantic power. Aron's insistence on reminding his countrymen who won the Second World War did not go down easily, for the more that French ruling circles came to be indebted to American military intervention, the more they resented their dependence. It was, in many ways, far more difficult to be pro-American in Paris than to be anti-Soviet. Even Aron, in making the case that America had every right to be the dominant power in the West, felt the need to apologize for some of the peculiarities of American politics, such as the tendency of its political leaders to moralize when they ought to analyze.

Aron's realpolitik was as uncomfortable to French sensibility as Henry Kissinger's later was to the American sensibility. Most Americans prefer Wilsonian idealism to realpolitik. The French reject the cold calculation of interest in the name of *la gloire*. Aron's *La Tragédie algerienne*, which came out in 1957, shocked polite French opinion. People assumed that, in criticizing French Algeria, Aron was changing sides. As he rightly points out, they misunderstood his views. Sentiment played no role in his analysis. Geography and demography destined Alge-

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ria to be Algerian; and Aron had only contempt for those whose passion for a greater France led them to think otherwise.

By the end of the 1950s, Aron had become a one-man truth squad in bringing European, and especially French, thought in line with the realities of world politics. There may have been no better journalist writing anywhere in the world at the time, certainly none with the breadth of Aron's interests and the clarity of his purpose. Already a prolific author and an increasingly influential figure, the only question facing Aron, as he contemplated a job so far well done, was what he would do next. But two things happened to Aron in the second half of the 1950s that changed, and ultimately weakened, his life's work. One was that he returned to the university. The other was that America discovered him.

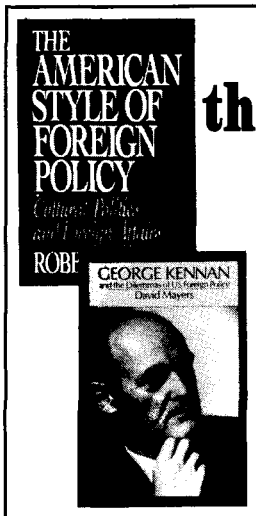
Aron decided in 1955 to compete for an academic position at the Sorbonne. Not having served his time in the provinces, he stirred enough resentment to transform his appointment into a public controversy. Georges Balandier was not the strongest competitor, however, and Aron was able to win the job, in plenty of time to witness the revolutionary changes that culminated in 1968. Although he continued his journalism, Aron obviously wanted more than immediate influence. His appointments at the Sorbonne and at the College de France gave him the opportunity to become a thinker of world-class stature.

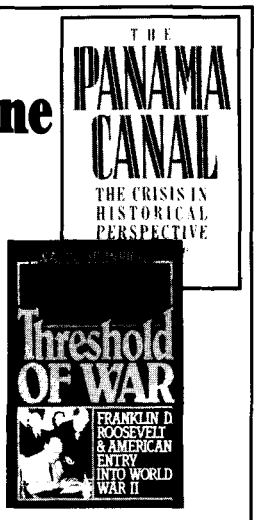
Yet it was a stature that Aron never achieved. To be sure, he wrote some very important books and was associated with some very important ideas. His two-volume *Main Currents in Sociological Thought* (1967)—his best work—presented as clear an introduction to the ideas of Montesquieu, Comte, Tocqueville, and Pareto as one could hope to find. The publication of his academic lectures, furthermore, introduced into public discussion the notion that it was not the difference between capitalism and socialism that shaped the world, but the rise of industrial society in any form. Aron contributed as well to the discussions about totalitarianism and democracy that dominated the postwar years. And his massive *Peace and War* (1962), along with his reflections on Clausewitz, brought to sociology a concern with international relations and war-making that had been missing in a discipline given to idealistic longings for harmony and cooperation.

Still, looking back, as Aron's memoirs force us to do, one sees books written too fast, with too little reflection, with little or no original research. A tendency toward pontification and an elaboration of the obvious in numbing detail had already existed in Aron's work, even before he turned to the academic world. *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955), for example, simply does not have the literary power of, say, *The Captive Mind*. Aron was a popularizer and a systematizer; he was caught between two audiences, and was unable to satisfy either one. Of Aron it could be said that few people have written more books whose main theme is impossible to summarize. He could, at his worst, recall Toynbee or Spengler.

It was during this period that Aron's influence spread to the United States. He became Washington's favorite European. He was an active member of the Harvard-MIT seminar out of which Kennedy's foreign policy was created. Kissinger became a close friend. Robert McNamara invited him to the Pentagon, carefully placing a copy of *The Great Debate*, Aron's book about nuclear strategy that appeared in 1963, on his desk (as Aron rather pathetically notes). Washington needed Aron to add a dollop of intellectual sophistication. Aron needed Washington because rootless Jewish intellectuals—he describes himself as "de-Judaized, an un-

From the Monroe Doctrine to Manuel Noriega

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believer, non-practicing, of French culture, with no Jewish culture"—are likely to be more respected there than in Paris.

Aron's flirtation with this country, however, did not have happy consequences for the quality of his thought. The point of realism is to look at the world clearly with a view toward adopting policies untainted by sentiment, emotion, and personal loyalty. Yet as a thinker develops "contacts," influential friendships, and intimate connections, his advantages of clarity and honesty will almost certainly be lost. "Was I more indulgent toward American diplomacy in 1969-75 because of my personal relations with one of its creators?" he wonders about his close friendship with Kissinger. Of course he was, or he would not have asked. There is something unbecoming and saddening about Aron's anxiety that his readers know how close he was to the secretary of state.

Aron's susceptibility to flattery led him to fail the test of Vietnam. While the American role in Vietnam could not be compared exactly to the French role in Algeria, in both cases the proper realpolitik strategy was to cut losses. Willing to confront the prejudices of his own country, Aron was unable to confront those of his new audience in Washington. Did Aron really not know that the Kennedy people *always* outfitted their desks with the books of the people to whom they were talking? (Norman Mailer was once bowled over when a primed John F. Kennedy, having learned from Pierre Salinger which of Mailer's books the author himself preferred, remarked that he liked *The Deer Park* best of all.) Aron had remarkably little to say about Vietnam; this loquacious writer seemed to want to leave the subject for other issues.

We will never know whether it was his susceptibility to flattery or simply his intellectual exhaustion that caused Aron's more ambitious writings of the 1970s to suffer along with his punditry. *In Defense of Decadent Europe* (1977) is little more than a string of clichés, ideologically rigid and embarrassing to read. At a time when the Western European Communist Parties were descending into decrepitude, Aron described them as part of a doctrinally vital international movement prepared to take state power. "In the Soviet Union today," Aron wrote, "more coal and all other forms of energy resources are being produced than in the United States," as if Soviet communism was still on its way to burying American capitalism. "Does it follow," he asks at one point in the book, "that the 'hour of liberalization' has struck in the Soviet Union?" His answer is, no. Almost no one, of course, could have foreseen the developments of the Gorbachev era, but in his last books Aron foresaw them even less than most. Anti-Sovietism, in short, had been replaced by anti-communism at a time when the Soviet Union no longer questioned the postwar division of Europe. Aron, rather than seeking a realistic stability, was urging ideological struggle.

If Aron's thought was sliding into pathos, he rescued himself with one grand, final effort: his memoirs. Though they are often pompous and self-justifying, Aron's recollections take the reader through fascinating worlds in a fascinating way. For better or worse, they don't make intellectuals like this anymore. Neither in France nor in the United States are we likely ever again to see such a cohort of brilliant minds, all of whom live in one city, have known each other since childhood, are in the process of creating (rather than repeating) ideological positions, and are so equally at home at both academic and journalistic endeavors. By bringing that world to life so vividly, Aron has vindicated his later years. He has left a document that reminds us of a vital truth: that the proper concern of intellectuals is the struggle to see reality, even if they are not always successful.

The ideas in nearly all of Raymond Aron's works seem to have been confirmed by world events. Weber proved to be more prophetic in his analysis of industrial society than Marx. France lost Algeria. Germany will become the dominant power in Europe. Deterrence averted a nuclear war. The West won, but it exhausted itself in the process. About the only one of Aron's great themes that has not been proved by recent events is the biggest one of all: communism collapsed, its threat to world peace fizzled. Yet it is not by a score card of correct predictions that we judge social thinkers. It is by the standard of their usefulness in our attempt to define the meaning of the world around us. Aron—not all the time, but enough for any one man—was not only useful, he was indispensable. The same cannot be said for most of the others of his country and his generation.

ALAN WOLFE was recently named Michael E. Gellert Professor of Sociology and Political Science and dean of the graduate faculty at the New School for Social Research.

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The Not-So-Velvet Revolution

By James Joll

T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937): Thinker and Critic edited by Robert B. Pynsent

(St. Martin's Press, 212 pp., $49.95)

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk was the founder of the Czechoslovak state. This seems such an obvious historical fact that it is easy to overlook what a remarkable achievement it really was. In 1987, which was the fiftieth anniversary of Masaryk's death, his legacy of a liberal Czechoslovakia seemed to have disappeared almost completely; but three years later the hopes that accompanied his triumphant return to Prague in 1918 as president of a new republic seem to have some prospect of being realized. And there is an encouraging parallel in the election of a distinguished author as president of Czechoslovakia after last year's upheavals: its first president, too, was a philosopher and a writer, rather than a professional politician.

In an "attempt to dust away some of the cobwebs" that had grown around the traditional portrait of Masaryk, a conference was held in December 1986 at the London University School of Slavonic and East European Studies (another institution of which Masaryk became a founding father, during his exile in London during World War I). One of three volumes of the proceedings has now been published, just in time to celebrate the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia. It deals with Masaryk as "thinker and critic"; the assessment of his achievement as a statesman remains for the other volumes. As a thinker alone, Masaryk would not rank as one of the great men of the early twentieth century (though he was certainly a better philosopher than some other contemporary statesmen who wrote philosophy, such as Jan Smuts, or R. B. Haldane, or Walther Rathenau). Still, this volume gives a vivid sense of the range of his interests, of the moral and social values that inspired his politics.

Tomáš Masaryk (he took his middle name from his American wife, whom he met while a student in Leipzig) was born in 1850. His parents were poor: his father worked on a large estate as a groom, a coachman, and a bailiff; his mother had been a cook. More important, in an environment in which national origins were becoming increasingly significant, Masaryk's father was a Slovak who lived in the predominantly Czech province of Moravia. Difficult relations between the two branches of what was to become the Czechoslovak nation were a central problem during Masaryk's later political career.

During the years that Masaryk was growing up and studying in Leipzig and Vienna, Czechs in the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, part of the Austrian half of the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy, were becoming more nationally conscious. In Prague, the capital of Bohemia, an increasingly assertive Czech University of Prague was founded in 1881; the Czech national theater was built by popular subscription, and though it was soon destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt and opened in 1881. Czech schools were multiplying, and the rate of literacy among the Czechs was notably high. The Slovaks, on the other hand, were under Hungarian rule and remained economically and socially far less developed than the Czechs. While a Czech national movement mounted in strength, in Slovakia a few village priests and schoolmasters struggled to fan a spark of national feeling.

By the early 1880s Masaryk was establishing himself in an academic career. After leaving the University of Vienna, he was appointed an assistant professor of philosophy at the new Czech University in Prague in 1882. Although he was not made a full professor until 1897, he became increasingly important as an intellectual and as an independent political figure. He was a celebrated and admired teacher who attracted not just Czech students, but also many from the other Slav lands of the Hapsburg Monarchy. He was writing works of sociology, contributing to literary magazines, and developing his own deeply felt and rather simple ethical philosophy.

His first published work, on *Suicide as a Social Mass Phenomenon*, appeared in 1881, sixteen years before Emile Durkheim's more famous work, and reached some of the same conclusions. Masaryk saw that the loss of religious faith and authority meant that people needed new principles and a new framework to guide their lives. He himself had been brought up as a Catholic but had become an undogmatic Protestant. He believed that social reform depended on individual moral reform. "The whole 'social question,' " he wrote in *Suicide*, "is the question of whether we really want to become moral and reasonable."

As Benjamin B. Page points out in his essay on Masaryk's social philosophy, his views changed remarkably little. They remained grounded in a belief in reason and the moral value of hard work, and in a strict, almost prudish personal morality, especially in sexual matters. (Was this perhaps a reaction against the atmosphere of Schnitzler's Vienna, where he had spent some of the formative years of his youth?) There was need for a social revolution, but it must be more moral and less materialistic than that envisaged by the Marxists. "Ethical, aesthetic, and scientific categories [are] no less real than bread and water," he wrote, as Jan Milič Lochman reports in an interesting discussion of Masaryk's quarrel with Marxism. Though he hoped that it would be possible to avoid violence, he rejected Tolstoy's total pacifism, despite his great admiration of him: "We must consistently reject every act of violence; otherwise we shall never be able to disentangle ourselves from violence. We may, should, must protect, defend ourselves. In extreme cases with the sword. But even in self-defense we must restrain ourselves from new, active acts of violence."

Masaryk's moderation, pragmatism, and ethical convictions meant that his attitude to the Czech nationalist political parties was an ambiguous one. At first he tended to find the atmosphere of nationalist circles in Prague rather provincial and unrealistic. He was genuinely cosmopolitan; he traveled widely in Europe and the United States. In the early 1890s he was briefly a member of the Young Czech party, and served for a short time as a member of their group in the Vienna parliament. But he soon withdrew, and he became, as Jacques Rupnik writes in a valuable essay on Masaryk and Czech socialism, a "man on the sidelines" of the political parties.

Two episodes during the next decade alienated him still further from many of his compatriots, and illustrate his intellectual independence and moral courage. The first was a fierce debate about some reputedly medieval documents

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that had been discovered in the early nineteenth century, which seemed to prove that a flourishing literature in Czech had existed far earlier than previously supposed; based on these documents, patriotic scholars claimed that Czech medieval poetry could hold its own with the ballads and epics of France and Germany. In 1886 Masaryk endorsed the views of a philologist who suggested that the documents might be forgeries. The controversy continued for three years, with the founder of the Czech Academy setting up a fund to reward anyone who could prove the manuscripts to be genuine. Masaryk was attacked as a traitor and an atheist, but he had made his point that the Czech national revival must be based on truth rather than on forgery, in the spirit of the Hussite slogan "*Pravda vítězi*," truth will prevail.

This volume does not contain any discussion of the debate over the forged manuscripts, but it does have a detailed account by Steven Beller of the other controversy in which Masaryk sided with an unpopular minority among the Czechs—the "Ritual Murder" trial in 1899. A young girl was murdered in a town in Moravia. A Jew, Leopold Hilsner, was arrested and charged with the murder. One of the most potent myths of popular central European anti-Semitism was at once evoked—the legend of the Jewish ritual murder, the belief that Jews needed the blood of a Christian in order to bake the unleavened bread for Passover. When Hilsner came to trial, he was implicitly accused of a Jewish ritual murder; and the lawyer representing the victim's mother was none too subtle, denouncing the accused as one of a "disgusting people, people of another race, people who acted like criminals have murdered a virtuous Christian virgin so that they could use her blood . . ." In this atmosphere of vociferous and widespread anti-Semitism in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, traditional slanders such as "blood libel" against the Jews were still extensively believed; and many Czechs in Moravia linked the murder of a Czech girl with the national cause.

Though he was not, by his own admission, wholly free of prejudice against the Jews (as Michael Riff shows in an interesting discussion of his ambiguous views on the Jewish question), Masaryk was indignant that his compatriots should be swayed by such ignorant superstition. Anti-Semitism, he believed, was a distraction from the Czech national struggle. He was also convinced that the evidence in Hilsner's trial had been deliberately misinterpreted to give plausibility to the allegations of ritual murder. As in the case of the forged manuscripts, he was determined to argue for the truth, because it was essential for the Czech cause that the Czech people not accept lies of any kind. (Hilsner was sentenced to death, though this was commuted to life imprisonment; and on the second appeal the court ruled that the motive was sexual, thus implicitly rejecting the charge of ritual murder.) Masaryk once again faced the hostility of his compatriots. One of his students wrote on the blackboard: "We hold against Masaryk that, in such difficult times, when it is essential that the nation should stand united as one man against the government . . . he wants to divide the whole nation for the sake of a Jew, and by dividing it, weaken it."

From the 1890s on, Masaryk was becoming increasingly involved in politics, though he continued working on literary criticism and philosophy—notably on a critique of Marxism—and produced his major work on Russian literature and philosophy, called, in its English translation, *The Spirit of Russia*. His political activities were still outside the mainstream of Czech nationalist activity. In 1900 he was one of the founders of the Czech People's Party, which was soon known as the Realist Party—an accurate reflection, perhaps, of Masaryk's own attitude. In 1907 he was elected to the parliament in Vienna, but the Realists held only two seats out of 108 held by Czechs. Still, his reputation was growing, and he was becoming widely known outside the Czech lands. His reputation beyond his borders grew in 1909, when he played a key role at a trial in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia; some southern Slav nationalists were accused of treason on the basis of documents that turned out to be forgeries, as Masaryk was able to demonstrate in the imperial parliament.

At this stage Masaryk, like almost everyone else, still believed that the Hapsburg monarchy could be reformed, granting some satisfaction to the claims of the nationalities. But in Bohemia and Moravia tension between Czechs and Germans was rising, especially over the question of which language should be used in local government. In the southern Slav provinces that were to become part of Yugoslavia, increasing numbers of nationalists were looking for support to the independent kingdom of Serbia and its powerful backer, the Russian czar. Among the Czech national leaders, Karel Kramář was the main exponent of similar views: Austria-Hungary should accept the fact that a majority of its inhabitants were Slavs, ally itself with Russia instead of with Germany, and thus become a bulwark against the spread of German influence in eastern Europe.

Masaryk, much influenced by British and French political thought, placed more hope in the support of the Western democracies, where scholars and publicists—Ernest Denis in France, Wickham Steed, the foreign editor of the *London Times*, and the historian R. W. Seton-Watson in Britain—were already making the Czech, Slovak, and southern Slav grievances known. For all his love of Russian literature—*The Spirit of Russia* re-

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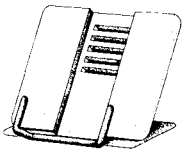

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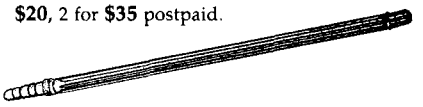

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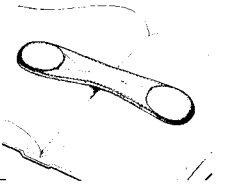

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mains well worth reading—Masaryk did not believe that an alliance with autocratic czarist Russia would help the kind of development that he wanted for the Czech people, and he had doubts about the stability and efficiency of czarist rule. Looking back in the 1920s, he saw his view vindicated: "I think that one of my soundest political judgments and decisions was in not staking our national cause on the Russian card alone and in seeking, on the contrary, to win the sympathies of all the Allies instead of sharing the mood of uncritical and passive Russophilia then prevalent." (The division between Masaryk and Kramář carried over into the new state, of which Kramář was the first prime minister, and took in part the form of rivalry between those who had worked for Czech independence abroad and those, like Kramář himself, who had stayed behind in Austria.)

When war broke out in 1914, Masaryk made the decision that proved most fateful both for himself and for the future Czechoslovak state. He concluded that there was no longer any hope for the Czech nation within Austria, and at the end of the year he left to work for Czech independence in exile in the Allied capitals. In his sixties he became an international statesman. Masaryk's achievement between 1914 and 1918 still seems phenomenal, perhaps only comparable to Chaim Weizmann's success during the same period in persuading the British government to accept the idea of a national home for the Jews. But Masaryk's success was more immediate, and the Jewish state was still far off. Weizmann had the unexpected advantage, moreover, of a widespread belief in the international power of the Jews, which made it seem advisable to placate them. Many Allied statesmen knew very little about the Czechs and Slovaks, and the Allied governments were slow to accept the idea of the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian empire, clearly implied by the creation of an independent Czech state.

Although we have eyewitness accounts—Masaryk's own in *The Making of a State*, and his friend Seton-Watson's in *Masaryk in England*—it still seems amazing that Masaryk pulled it off. As early as November 1914, shortly before Masaryk finally left Austria, a British official noted that "Masaryk is a man of great weight among the Czechs and [his] ideas are serious and worth bearing in mind." But it was not until August 1918 that the British government recognized the Czecho-Slovak National Council, which Masaryk had struggled to put together out of several disparate groups and individuals, as "the trustee of the future Czecho-Slovak government."

During these years Masaryk and his exiled colleagues in Paris, Rome, and Petrograd had been winning over influential politicians to their cause. Masaryk had to deal with the various émigrés and their often conflicting personalities. He had to take account of the views of the large Czech and Slovak colonies in the United States, and persuade them to reach agreement on the position of the two national communities in the new state. He had to maintain clandestine communications with the increasingly restive Czech nationalists at home. By the end of the war, there was a Czech Legion fighting on the Allied side, composed largely of Czech prisoners of war and deserters in Russian hands, and this produced extremely complex problems, especially after the revolution in Russia.

By 1918 Masaryk was undisputed leader of the new Czechoslovak state. In May he traveled to the United States and was still there when, on October 28, the Czech leaders in Prague proclaimed Czechoslovak independence. A week later he received a telegram: "You as President of the Republic should return at once. . . . You have boundless authority and are expected." On November 14 he was formally proclaimed president in Prague. When he left New York, the U.S. government saw him off with a naval guard of honor. As Masaryk wrote, this was the first of "those military honors that were henceforth to be paid as I came and went, everywhere and always, compelling me again and again to realize that I had ceased to be a private individual."

He had indeed ceased to be a private individual; he was becoming a legend. Robert B. Pynsent points out the extent to which the personality cult that arose around Masaryk sometimes distorted his real achievements. He describes Masaryk as "a Victorian moralist imbued with the Protestant work ethic," but he seems perhaps not totally out of sympathy with those Czech modernist writers before 1914 who saw Masaryk as "a windbag moralist and would-be dictator." Certainly Masaryk's last years—he died in 1937, just in time to escape seeing the state he had brought into being sacrificed to the Nazis by the British and French at Munich in 1938—saw a degree of adulation such that, Pynsent tells us, even a Communist poet, Vítězlav Nezval, could commemorate his death with lines like these:

> When the Old Husbandman, as if at the peak of his strength,
> having left his normal seclusion, rides out on a Sunday,
> immense emotion, a joy which would make you weep,
> fell upon everyone who saw Him,
> and the Old Husbandman . . .
> paternally waved His black broad-rimmed hat.

New states need their heroes, and the very existence of the revered septuagenarian president gave the impression that the immense problems facing the new republic—the three million German minority, the demands of the Slovaks for more equal treatment and more autonomy, the resentment of the Hungarians over the territory lost to Czechoslovakia, an extremely complicated party system—could be overcome. Certainly Czechoslovakia between the wars had a record of economic success and political liberalism that far surpassed that of the other new states of eastern Europe. The memory of Masaryk lived on, moreover, through the dark decades of Nazi and Communist tyranny, so that, according to Pynsent, "Masaryk seems to have taken the place of the traditional Czech 'saints,' Wenceslas, Jan Hŭs, John Nepomucene. . . . As late as 1986 a camp-fire song about Masaryk was to be heard in Bohemia. . . . It is an adequate testimony to the survival of the Masaryk myth among today's Czech students."

Since the papers in this volume were written, that underground cult has become an open and living tradition. The new regime is lucky in being able to look back on a founding father who was both a realist and an idealist, who combined a sense of social justice with a sense of national independence. In 1925 Masaryk wrote, "I consider a consistent democracy, a democracy not only in the political, but also in the economic and social sense, to be the appropriate state of affairs for today and for a long time to come." If these words can still be applied to the Czech state in the 1990s, Masaryk's achievement will seem even greater than it did seventy years ago.

JAMES JOLL is emeritus professor of international history at the University of London.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

gorillas" ("Pet Causes," March 12). Goodall's lifework has been the study of chimpanzees, not gorillas.

This would not, perhaps, be a significant error had anyone other than Barnes made it. But surely the keeper of "White House Watch" needs to have a keener knowledge than most of the various primates and their behavior.

STEPHEN B. HENDRIX
Washington, D.C.

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FLORIDA DIARIST

Strike three

IN JACKSONVILLE A FEW WEEKS ago, someone took a shot at a Greyhound bus just as it was pulling off the highway. This "incident," one of a series of shootings that have occurred since the Greyhound drivers went on strike, took place around 9:30 at night, in plenty of time to make the late news. I know this because I had just checked into my hotel room on the outskirts of town and had flipped on the television. Like many American men, I try to connive to be in Florida for a week or so at the end of winter, preferably on someone else's dime. My ulterior motive is baseball's spring training, which really is one of America's more enjoyable rituals, even if it isn't nearly as enjoyable as it was, say, fifteen years ago, before baseball got "hot." Back then—back when even George Will considered baseball too boring for words—you could buy a ticket five minutes before a game began, sit hard by third base in some wonderful little band-box of a stadium, talk to the players, soak up the sun, and in general feel a real connection with the sport. Today, with baseball widely considered the epitome of all that is good and pure about America, half the major league teams train in less-than-friendly "complexes," and the stadiums look more like Shea than Ebbets Field, and if you don't get there two hours ahead of time you don't get a seat, and all anybody in the stands talks about is their cursed Rotisserie League draft. As for the players, they are more relaxed than they'll be once the season starts, but only slightly less rude (it is an open secret among sportswriters that baseball players have become more obnoxious as they've gotten richer), so don't even bother trying to talk to them. Not that I'm a curmudgeon about any of this. It's better that baseball be popular than not, and if that means you now have to stand in line to get into a meaningless spring-training exhibition game, well, the Republic will survive.

BUT OF COURSE THERE WAS NO spring training this year, or at least not during my stay in Florida. There were only strikes: the Greyhound strike, the Eastern strike, a year old and thus ripe for "anniversary" treatment, and the baseball strike. (Or, more accurately, the baseball lockout—the owners, after all, started this one.) In America today a strike has become almost a suicidal act. The point of most of the Eastern retrospectives I saw was that the strike was over in everything but name. The mechanics were still picketing outside Eastern's Miami headquarters, but it was a futile gesture; they had all been replaced. The pilots had long since voted to return to work, but most of them couldn't get their jobs back because they had been replaced too. The story at Greyhound is similar, except that it's happening much faster, since replacement bus drivers are easier to find than replacement airline mechanics. It is a quaint but irrelevant fact that the drivers' complaints are largely justified; Greyhound's relentless need for worker concessions stems not so much from competitive pressures as from self-imposed financial ones. The company is awash in $346 million of long-term debt, thanks to a leveraged buyout, and the drivers are now the ones who are going to pay for it. The violence is certainly lamentable, but it's also understandable—a product of rage and frustration and helplessness.

THE BASEBALL PLAYERS' UNION, on the other hand, seems to be the only one in the country that still bargains from a position of strength. Management wouldn't dare hire scabs, and baseball players make so much money that they can afford to sit out a long strike (or lockout). It's significant, I think, that the baseball union only became powerful in 1975, so there are plenty of people around with the institutional memory to conjure up the bad old days, when the players were absurdly underpaid and were treated by the owners as little more than glamorous chattel. (When David Halberstam was working on his book about the Boston-New York pennant race of 1949, he discovered that the general manager of the Yankees had an arrangement that allowed him to pocket the difference every time he signed a player for less than the team had budgeted for.) Mainly, though, the players' union wins its jousts with management because the people on the other side of the bargaining table are, collectively, idiots. This year's lockout, a blatant attempt to roll back the clock at a time when the game has never been more profitable, was ludicrous on the face of it, and everybody knew it. And over the past fifteen years, the players have cleverly maneuvered the owners into accepting a rigged system in which good players receive pretty much their fair market value, but marginal players are substantially overpaid. It would be so simple for the owners to turn the tables on the players (I thought to myself one afternoon, driving to Tampa and cursing the lockout). Instead of trying to rejigger salary arbitration and all the rest of it, they should simply call for a total free market for baseball players. Putting aside the public relations value of such a move, which would be immense, it also makes basic economic sense for the owners to prefer the workings of the market. The way things are now, every year one or two good second basemen become free agents (as they are allowed to do after six years in the major leagues). Because there is such a limited supply, demand is strong, and the players wind up with windfalls. Eventually (because of salary arbitration) all of baseball's second basemen find their salaries ratcheting upward because of their colleagues' good fortune. If the market were free, there would be a glut of second basemen on the market every year, and supply and demand would return to equilibrium. But the owners will never have the wit to propose such a move, and that's why they always lose these labor negotiations, as they did this year. Their great flaw is that they are capitalists who fear nothing so much as capitalism itself.

MY BASEBALL-LESS WEEK IN FLORida coming to an end, I bought George Will's new book in the airport bookstore, to read on the flight home. It's called *Men at Work*, and subtitled *The Craft of Baseball*, and to be honest, the purchase was an act of desperation. In general, I have an uncontrollable loathing of intellectuals who prattle on about their love for the game and their understanding of its many subtleties. It has always struck me as a particularly silly affectation, an attempt to show that they have at least this one thing in common with the Great Unwashed, all their brainpower notwithstanding. And on this front, I've long considered George Will Public Enemy No. 1. Well, mea culpa. His new book is terrific. The reason is that he has actually done reporting. He's used his Big Foot status to get himself invited to sessions that a mere sportswriter wouldn't have been allowed near. And he clearly did a ton of interviewing, extracting information that even the best-informed baseball fan will find illuminating. Hmmmm. What a novel idea: a big-shot journalist who actually interviews the people he's writing about. Reading *Men at Work* made me wonder: What would Will's column be like if he used this strange new technique when writing about politics as well as jocks?

JOSEPH NOCERA

Joseph Nocera went to Florida on *Esquire*'s dime.

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